

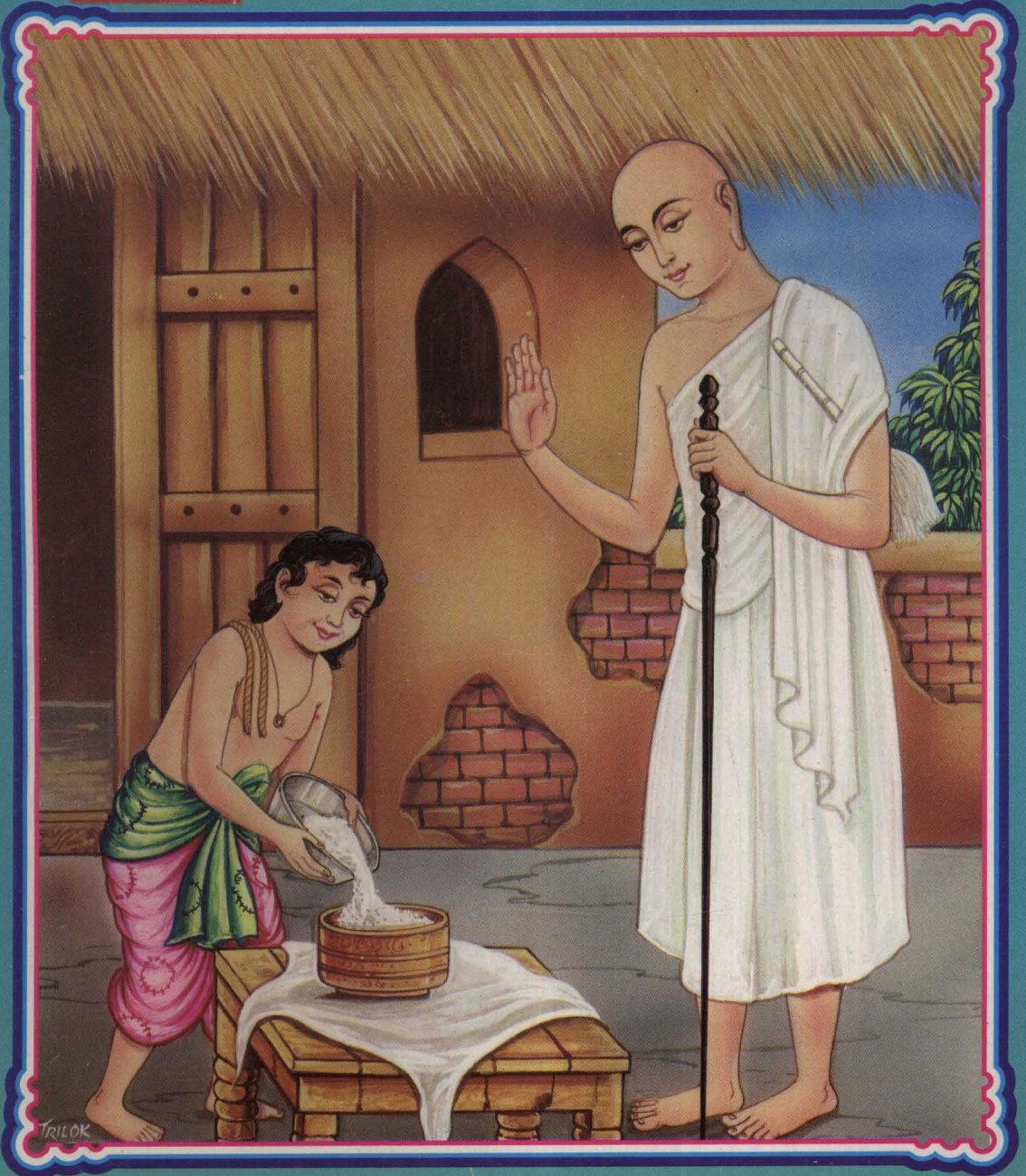


*A Mahavir Seva Trust Presentation*

# SHALIBHADRA

Vol. 47

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# SHALIBHADRA

In Jain literature and culture the legendary wealth of Shalibhadra has become a proverb — “Wealth like Shalibhadra”. But the fact is that his sacrifice or renunciation is even more astonishing than his mundane riches, beautiful and delicate body and good fortune. A tender young man, who had never stepped in sun and never experienced the extremes of heat and cold, suddenly abandoned all comforts and indulged in austerities. So rigorous were his practices that within a few months his body became weak, fragile and skeletal to an extent that his own mother failed to recognize him. He was unique not only in terms of his wealth and luxury but also in detachment and yoga. To have such tremendous willpower, determination, forbearance, and tolerance is indeed astounding. Bhagavan Mahavir has praised him with the epithet Mahasatvashali (endowed with paramount strength).

Dhanna was Shalibhadra's sister's husband. He was also a very wise, clever, valourous and pious person of his age. The story of Dhanna was published in this series at No. 8. Now we bring the story of Shalibhadra to our readers.

The story has many meaningful lessons. The reader will be inspired to follow these on his own.

—Shrichand Surana ‘Saras’

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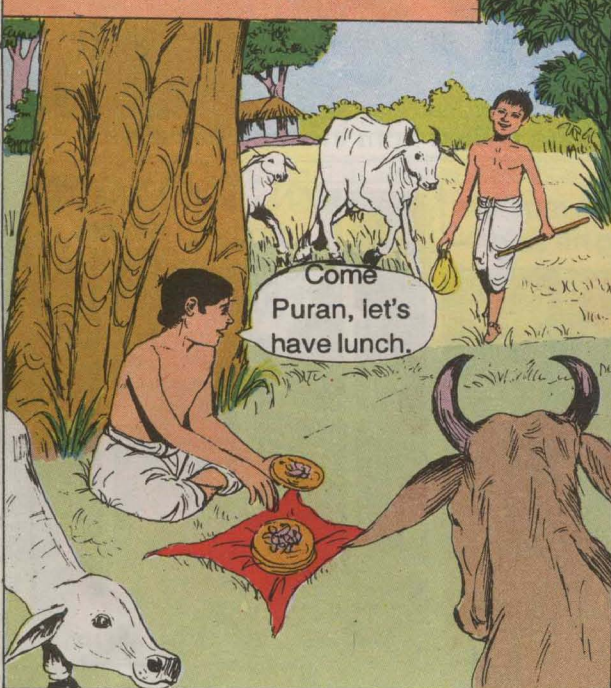


## SHALIBHADRA

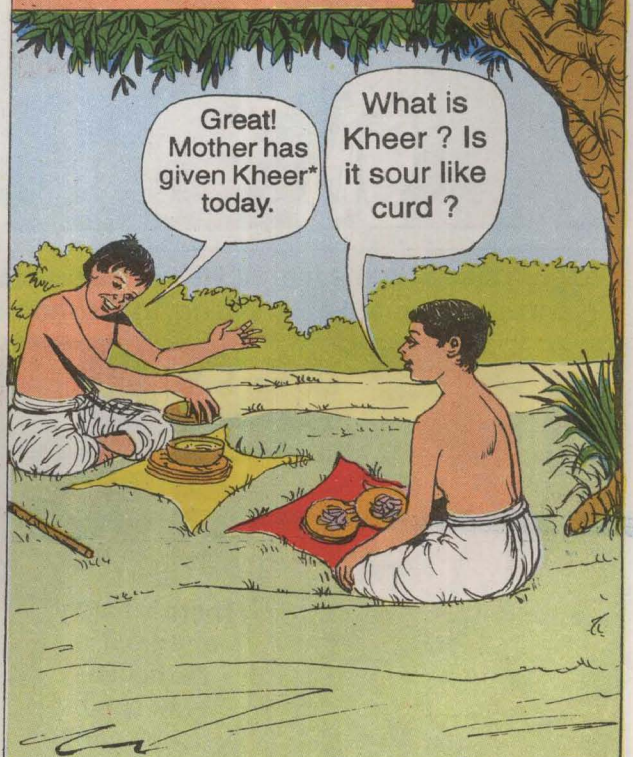
This story is more than 2500 years old. Near Rajagriha lived a widowed milkmaid with her son. One morning—



Soon it was noon. Sangam sat down under a tree to rest. He was joined by another cowherd of his age. Sangam said —

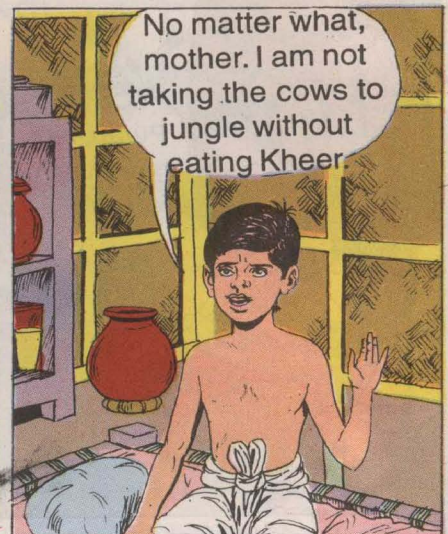
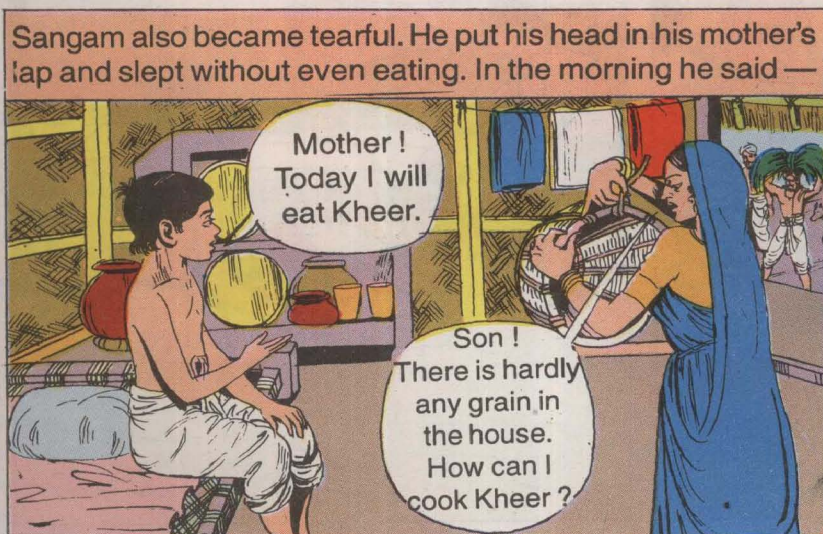
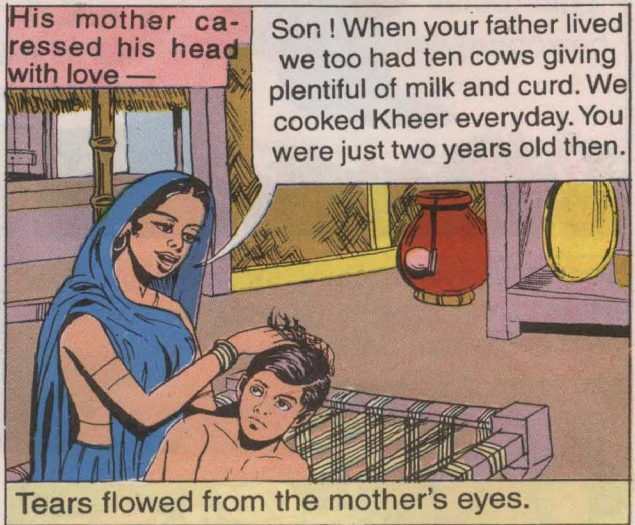
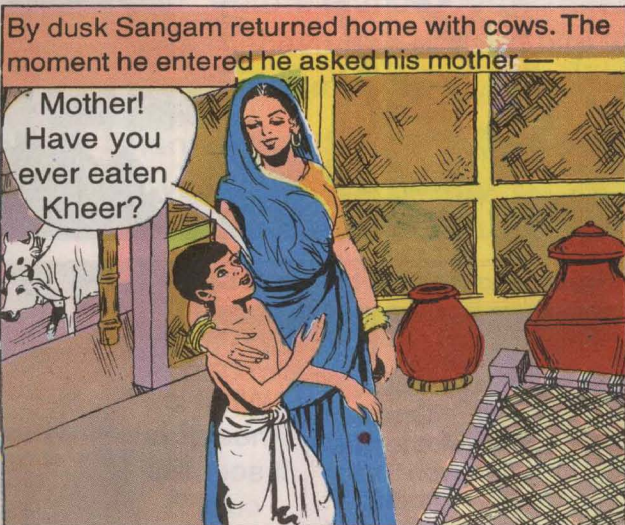
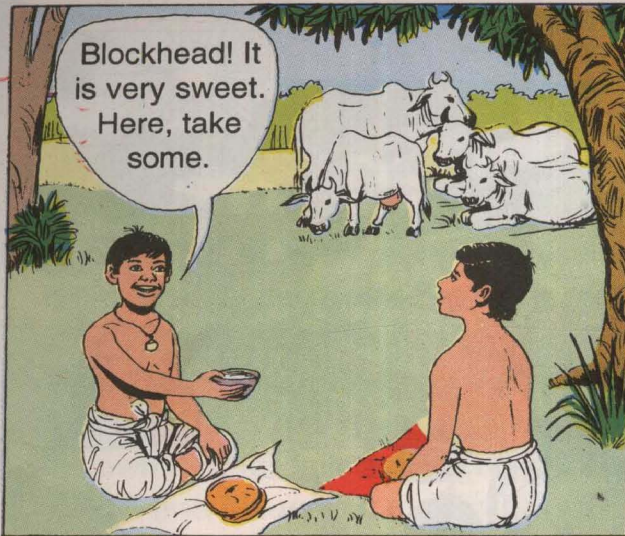


Puran also took out his lunch-bag —



\* A popular pudding of rice cooked in milk.



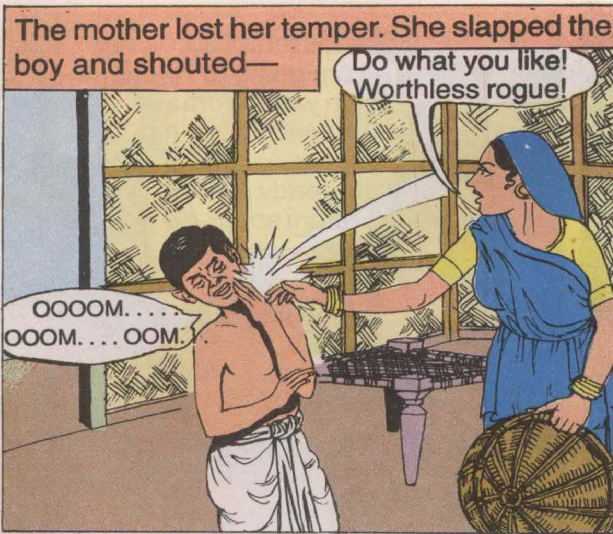




The mother lost her temper. She slapped the boy and shouted—

Do what you like!  
Worthless rogue!

OOOOM.....  
OOOM.... OOM.



Sangam started crying. Neighbours came and asked—

Dhanno ! What  
is the matter ?  
Why is Sangam  
crying ?

What can I do.  
Their is not a  
grain in the house  
and the tramp  
says he wants  
Kheer. How  
do I get it ?

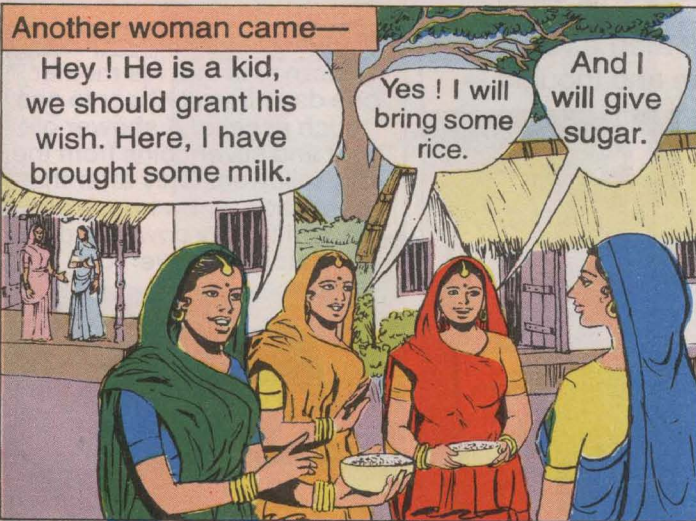


Another woman came—

Hey ! He is a kid,  
we should grant his  
wish. Here, I have  
brought some milk.

Yes ! I will  
bring some  
rice.

And I  
will give  
sugar.



The neighbours brought the required things.  
Dhanno came to console Sangam —

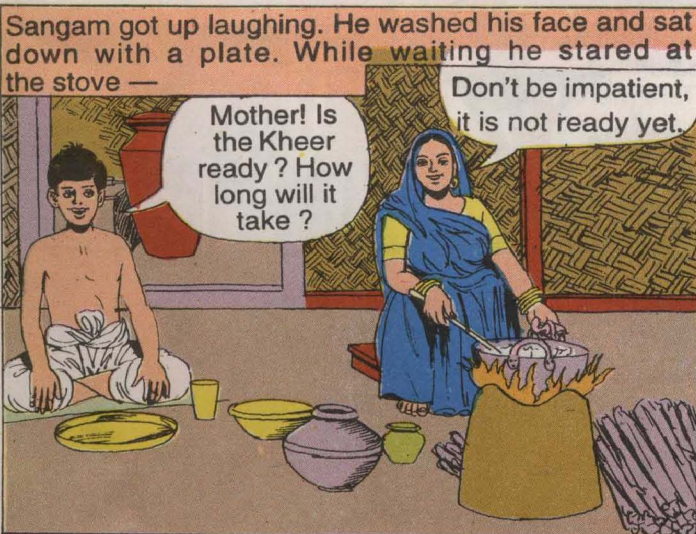
Come my son!  
You are lucky.  
God has send  
everything needed  
for Kheer. I will  
cook now. Stop  
crying and get up.



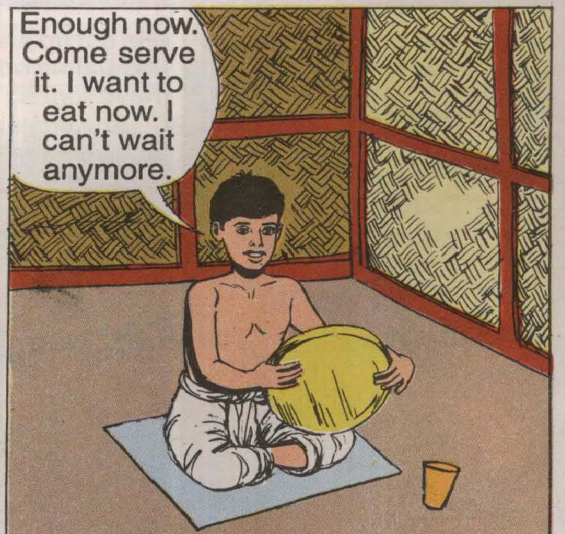
Sangam got up laughing. He washed his face and sat  
down with a plate. While waiting he stared at  
the stove —

Mother! Is  
the Kheer  
ready? How  
long will it  
take ?

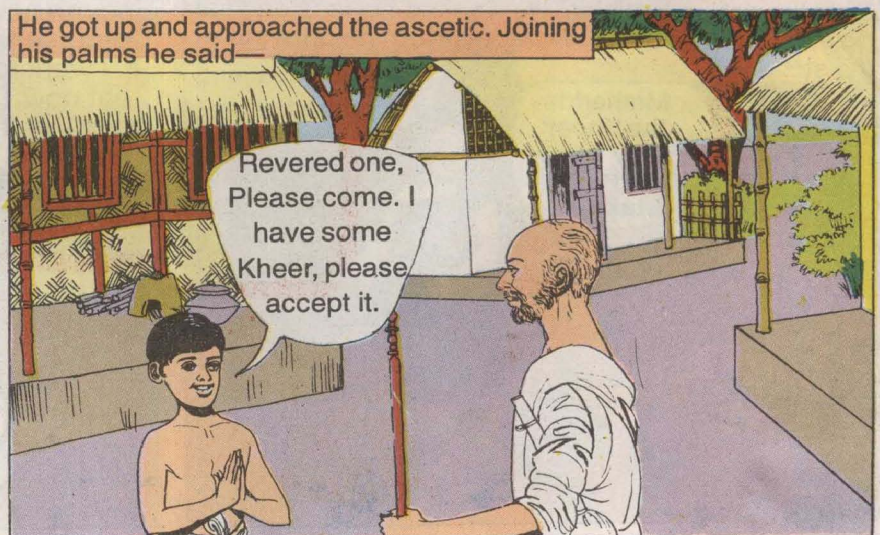
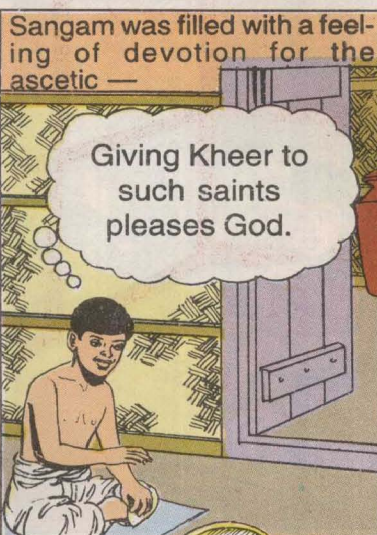
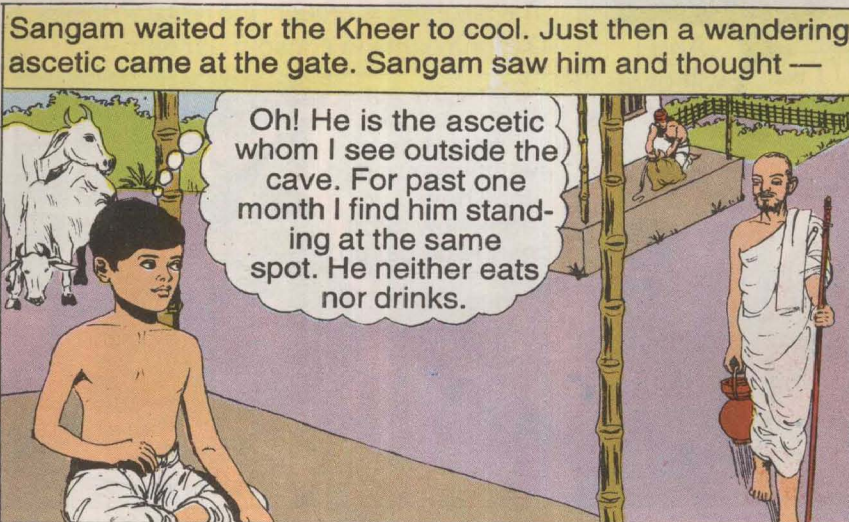
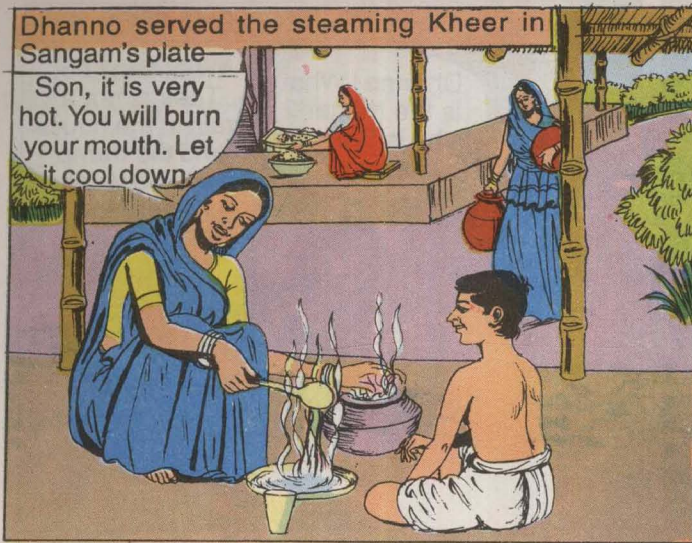
Don't be impatient,  
it is not ready yet.



Enough now.  
Come serve  
it. I want to  
eat now. I  
can't wait  
anymore.

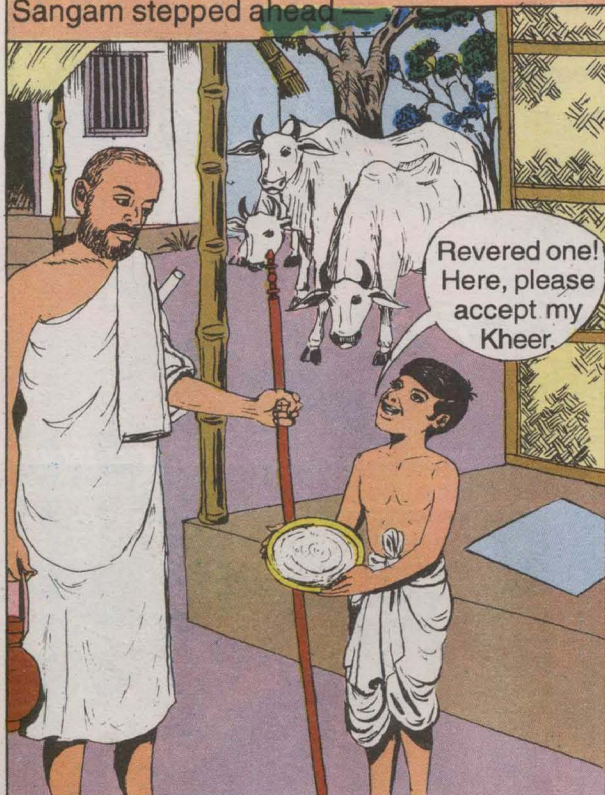




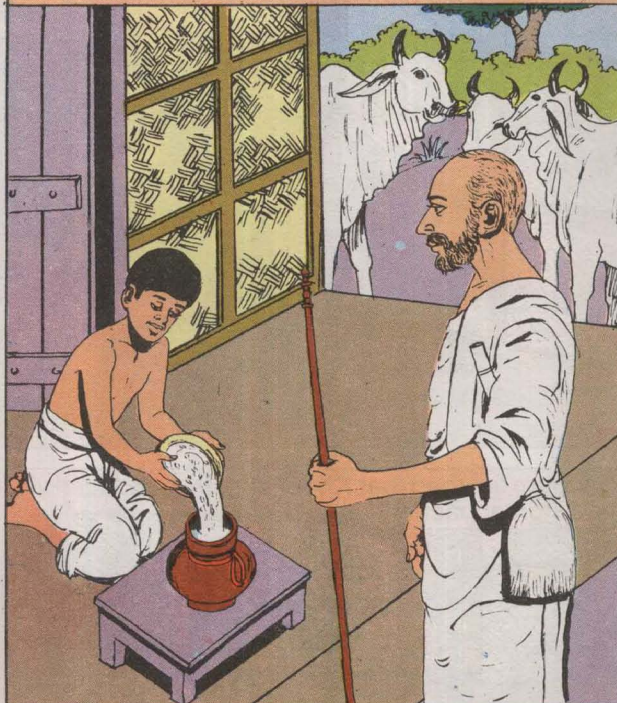




The ascetic looked at the child whose eyes beamed with devotion. The ascetic waited. Sangam stepped ahead.



The ascetic placed his bowl on the floor. With joy Sangam poured all the Kheer in that bowl.



The ascetic took the Kheer filled bowl and returned to the jungle where he broke his month long fast.

Sangam was so hungry he now licked the Kheer stuck to his plate —

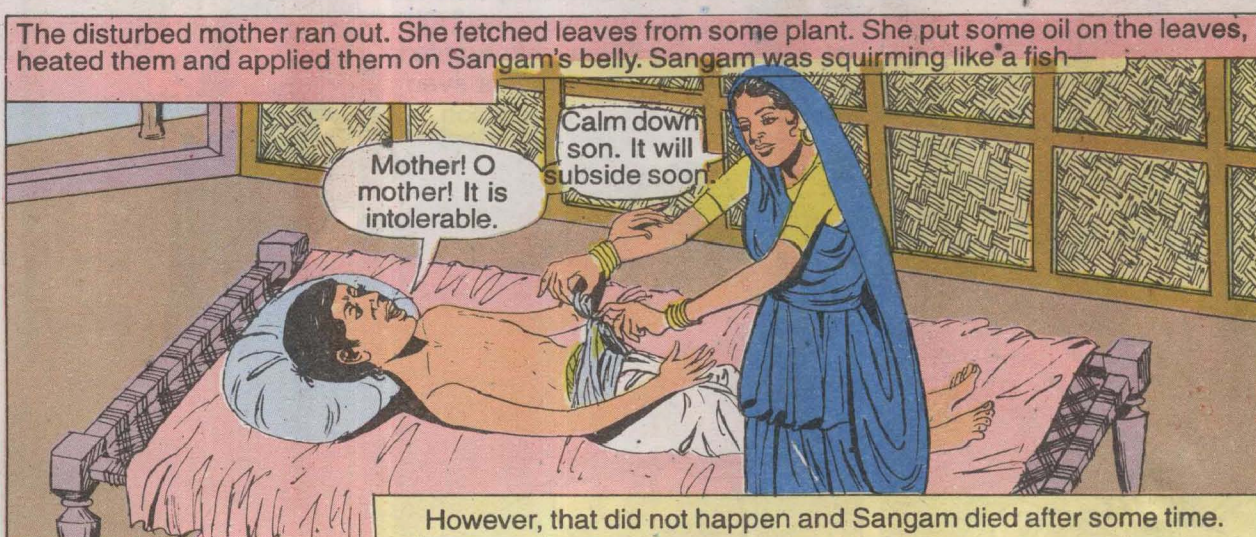


His mother returned after collecting water. She thought —

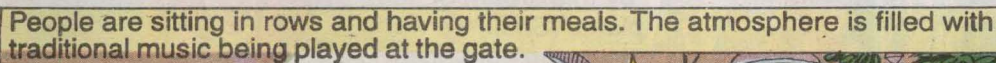
Sangam has eaten all the Kheer in the plate. He is still hungry and is licking the plate. Is my son so hungry every day? Oh God! How unfortunate I am that I cannot even feed my only son.





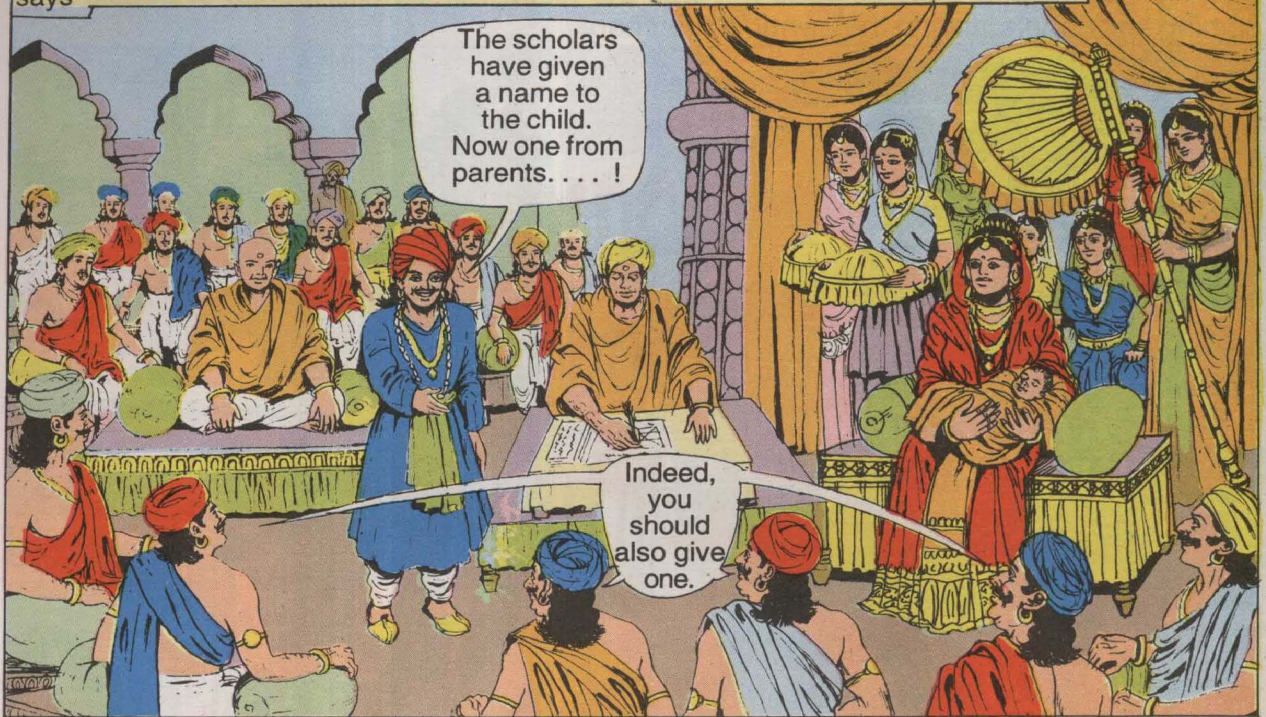








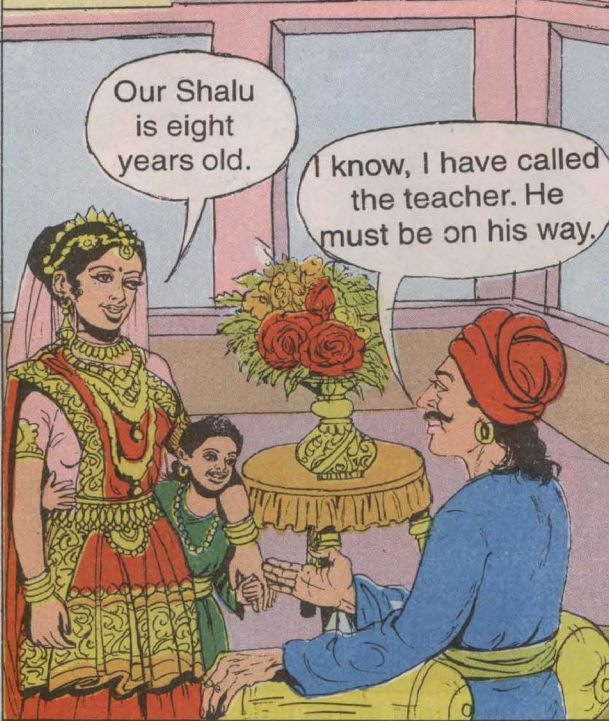
The naming ceremony is organized in a large pavilion. Mother Bhadra has the newborn in her lap. Scholars, astrologers, relatives and friends are sitting around the merchant. Gobhadra stands up and says —



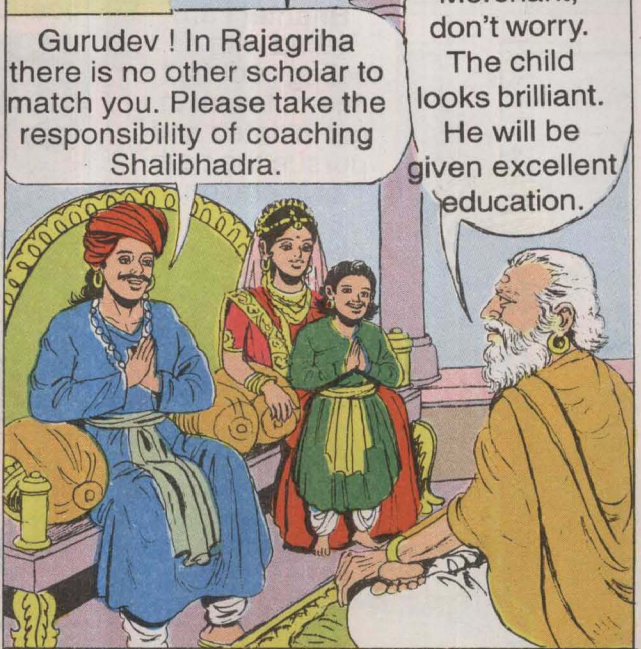
Filled with joy, Merchant Gobhadra gave charity everyday for one month.



Time was flying. One day Bhadra informed the merchant —

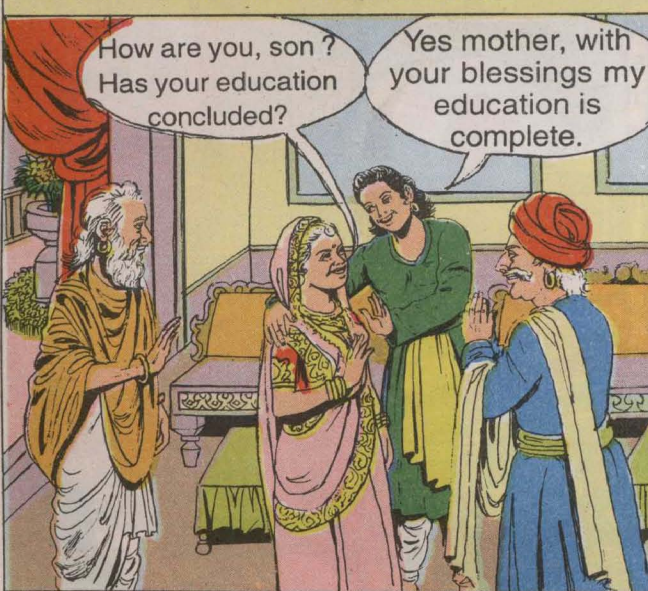


Next day Kalacharya Sushen, a famous teacher, came to Gobhadra —



The merchant offered rich gifts to the scholar who took Shalibhadra along to his ashram.

**RAJAGRIHA - AFTER TEN YEARS** One day Kalacharya Sushen brought Shalibhadra to the merchant's house. Mother Bhadra embraced her son —



The merchant honoured and amply rewarded the teacher before bidding him farewell.

Since the very next day started the visits of rich and prominent merchants with marriage proposals of their daughters. Gobhadra asked Bhadra —







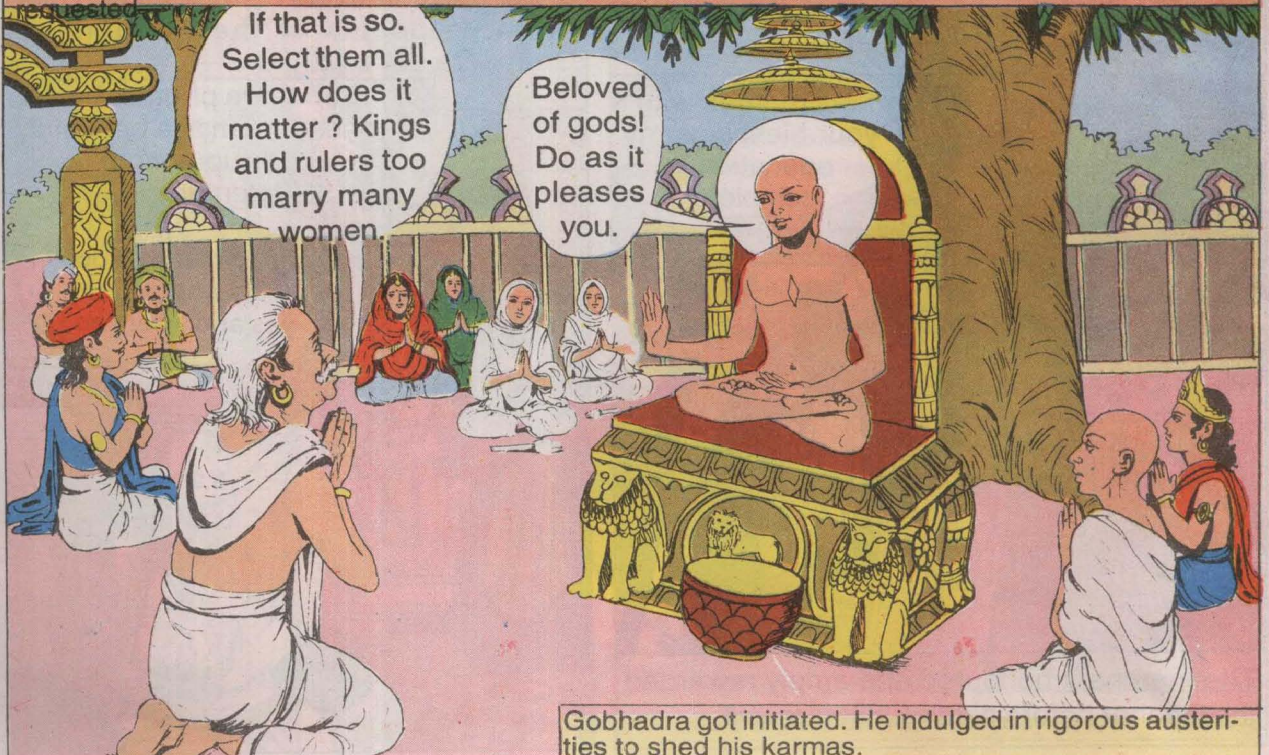
Bhadra looked at him in surprise.

And one day Shalibhadra was married to thirty two beautiful girls at the same time.



Shalibhadra now spent all his time in his palace.

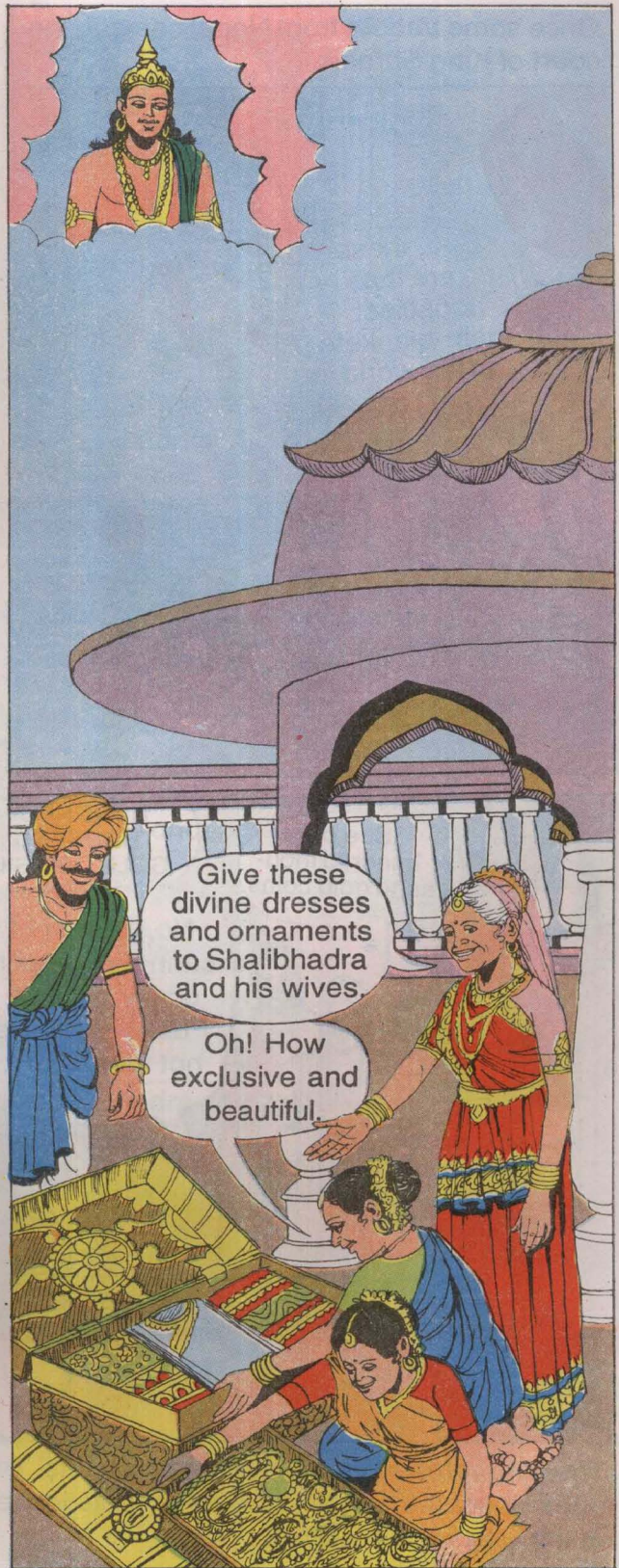
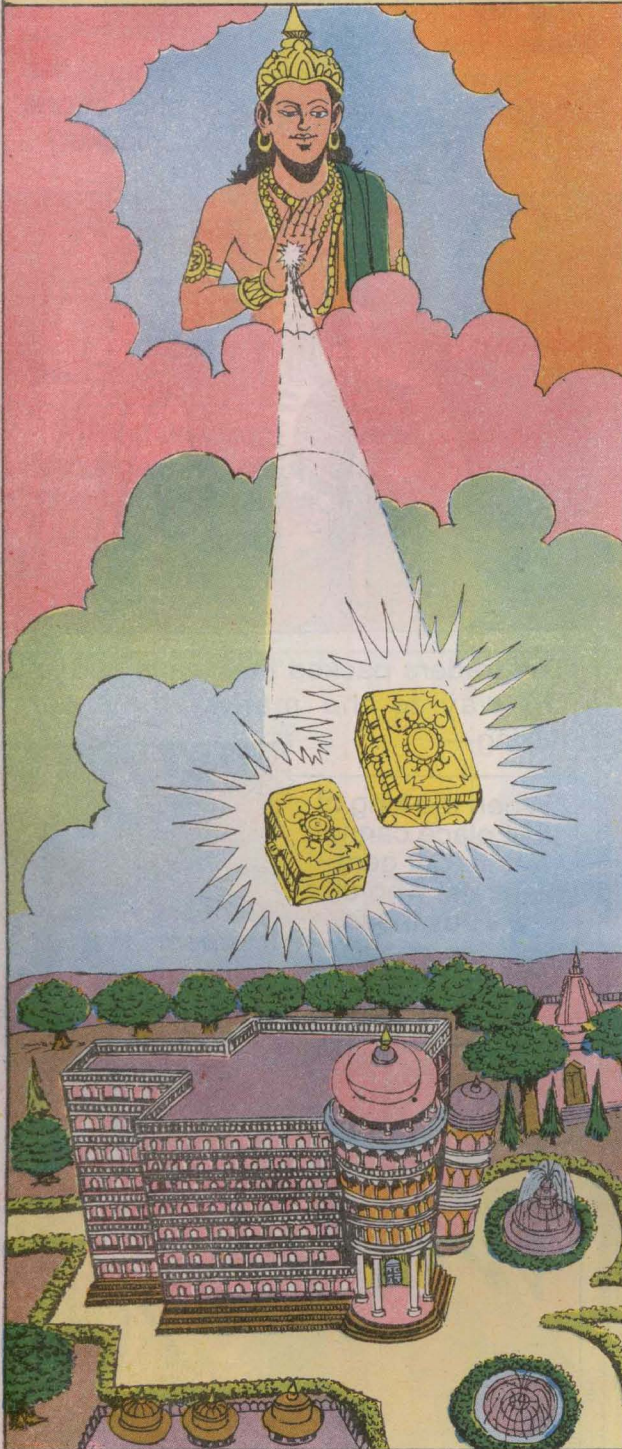
Once Bhagavan Mahavir came to Rajagriha. Merchant Gobhadra went to his discourse and requested.



Gobhadra got initiated. He indulged in rigorous austerities to shed his karmas.



At last ascetic Gobhadra accepted the vow of fasting till death. He reincarnated as a god. His deep love for his son inspired him to send boxes of divine dresses and ornaments every day to his son's palace.

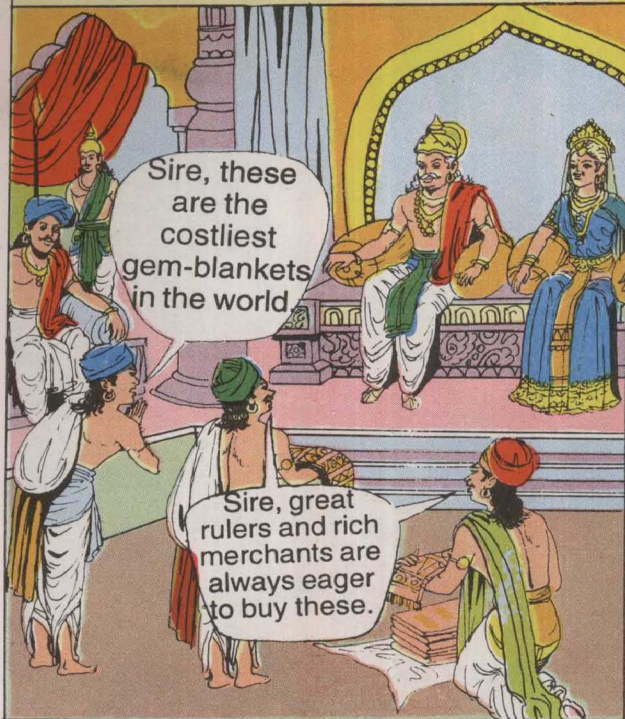


Give these divine dresses and ornaments to Shalibhadra and his wives.

Oh! How exclusive and beautiful.



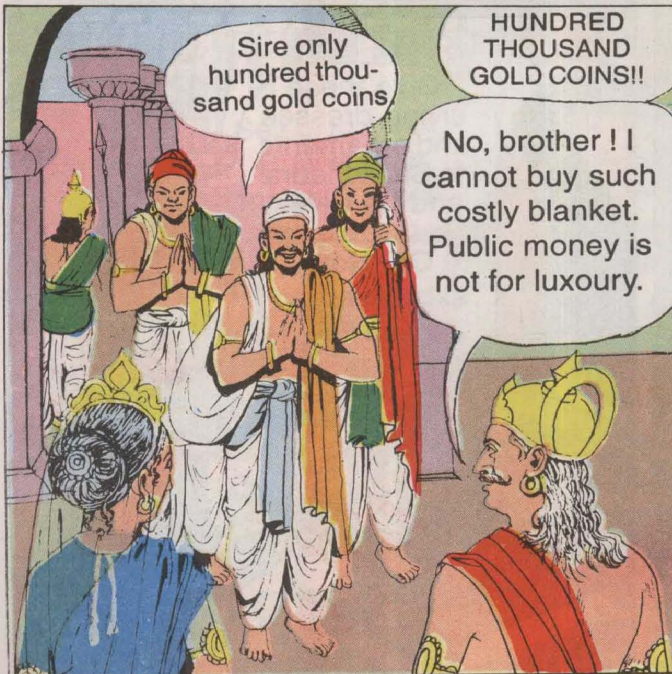
Once some traders from Nepal came to the court of King Shrenik.



Queen Chelana examined and said—

Excellent! They are very soft. How light and enchanting. My Lord! Please buy one for me.

What is the price of one blanket?

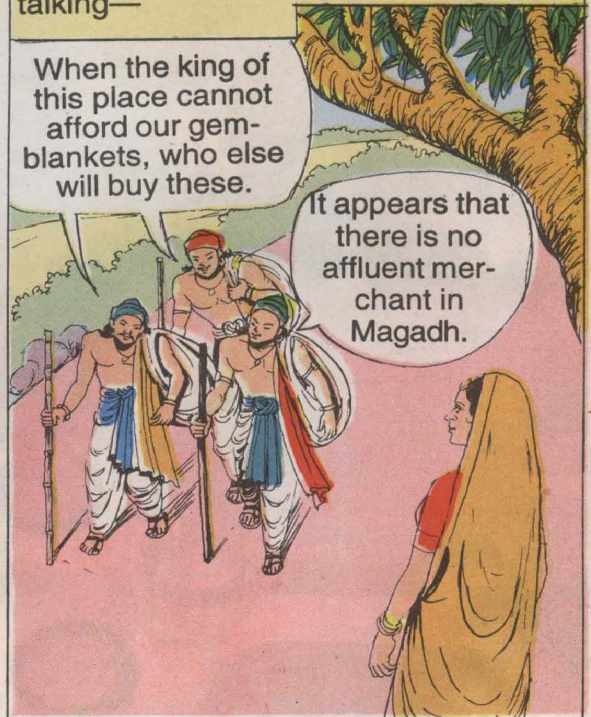


The king refused to buy the gem-blankets. The queen became sad and the merchants looked at the king with dejection.

The traders packed their bags and left. On way to the market they were talking—

When the king of this place cannot afford our gem-blankets, who else will buy these.

It appears that there is no affluent merchant in Magadh.

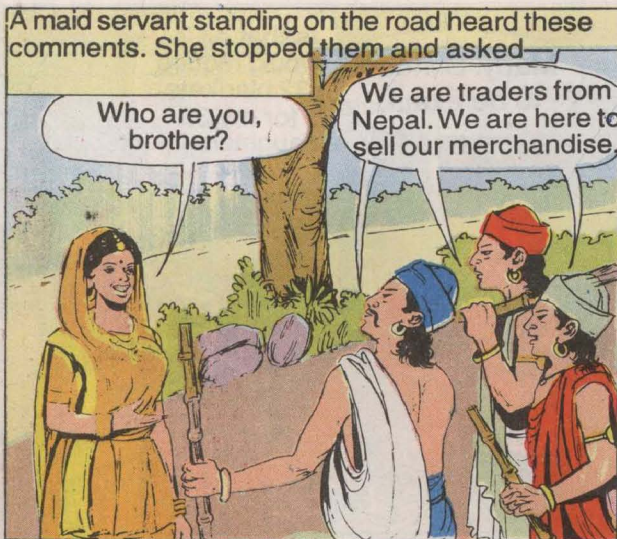




A maid servant standing on the road heard these comments. She stopped them and asked—

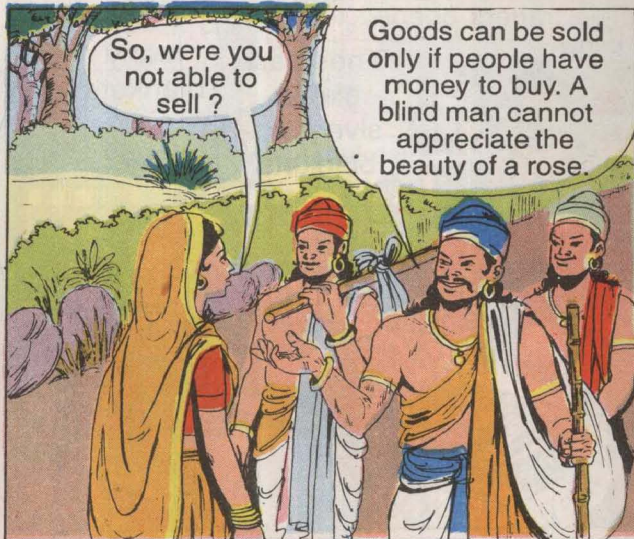
Who are you, brother?

We are traders from Nepal. We are here to sell our merchandise.

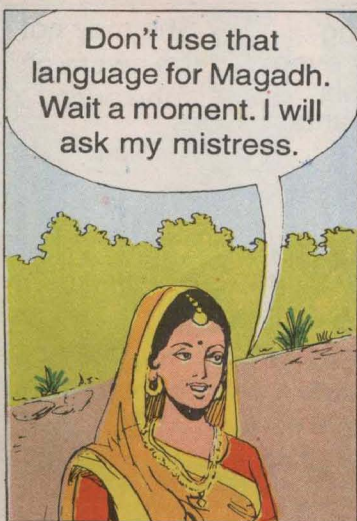


So, were you not able to sell?

Goods can be sold only if people have money to buy. A blind man cannot appreciate the beauty of a rose.



Don't use that language for Magadh. Wait a moment. I will ask my mistress.



The maid ran into the palace. She repeated the comments of the traders before Bhadra and added—

My Lady! These people say that only poor people live in Rajagriha.

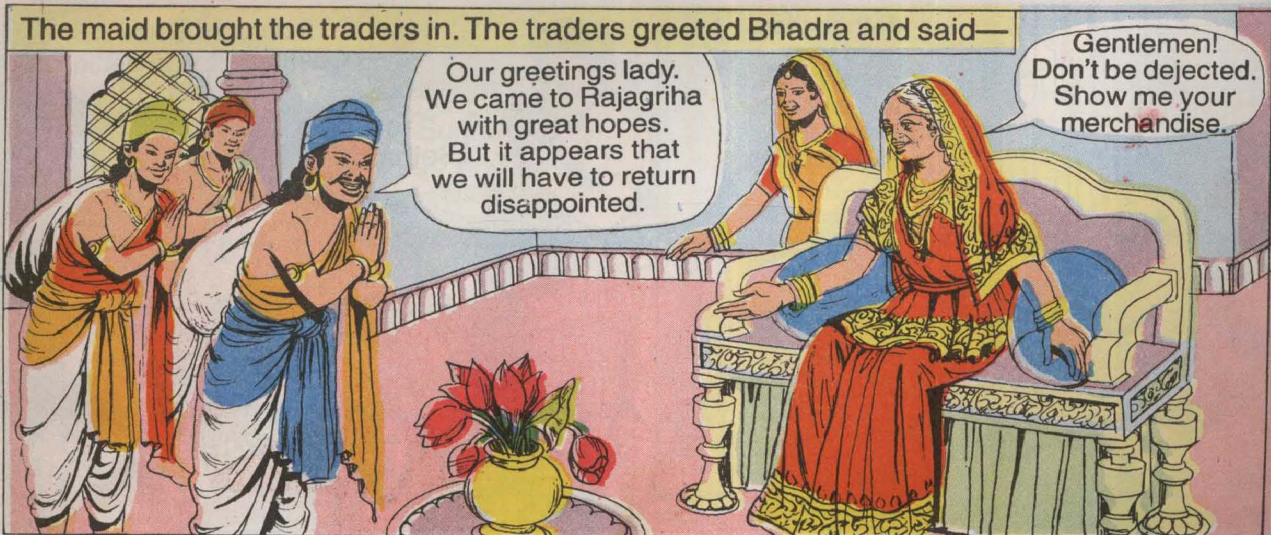
Is that so. Call them at once.



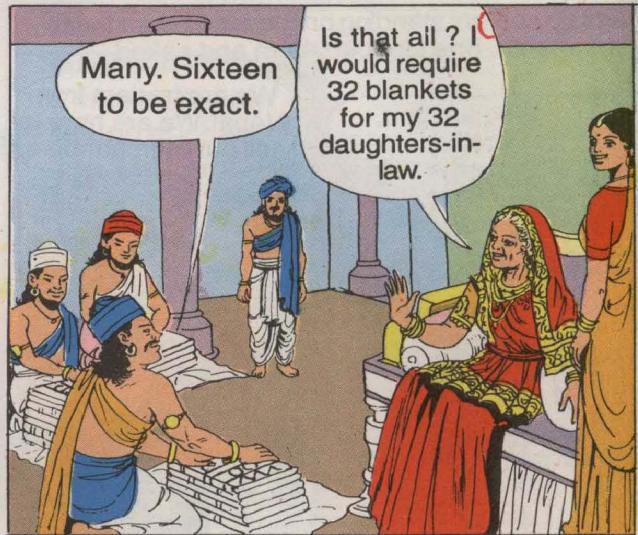
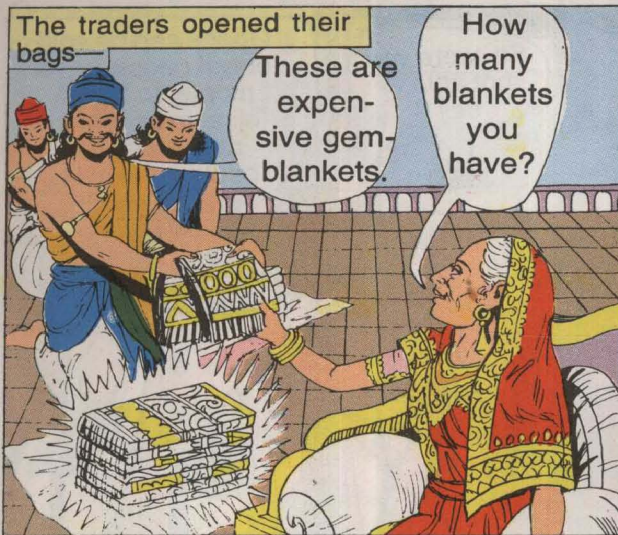
The maid brought the traders in. The traders greeted Bhadra and said—

Our greetings lady. We came to Rajagriha with great hopes. But it appears that we will have to return disappointed.

Gentlemen! Don't be dejected. Show me your merchandise.





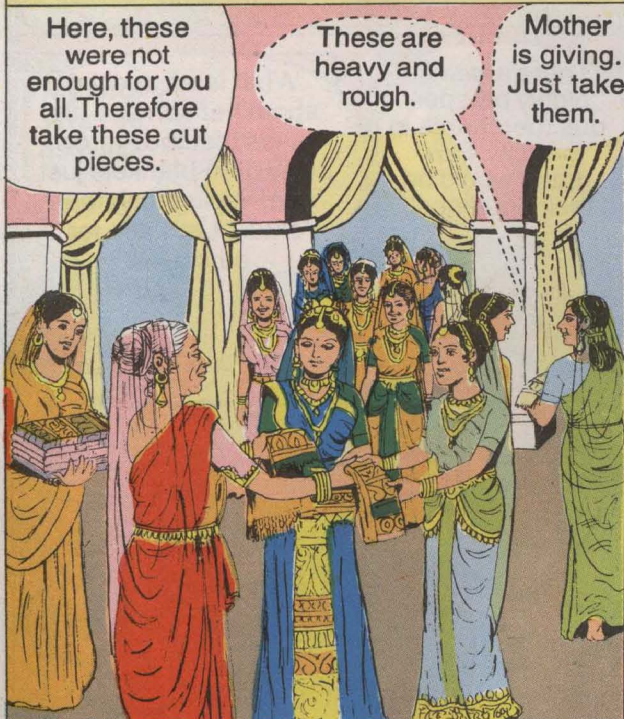


The surprised traders whispered—





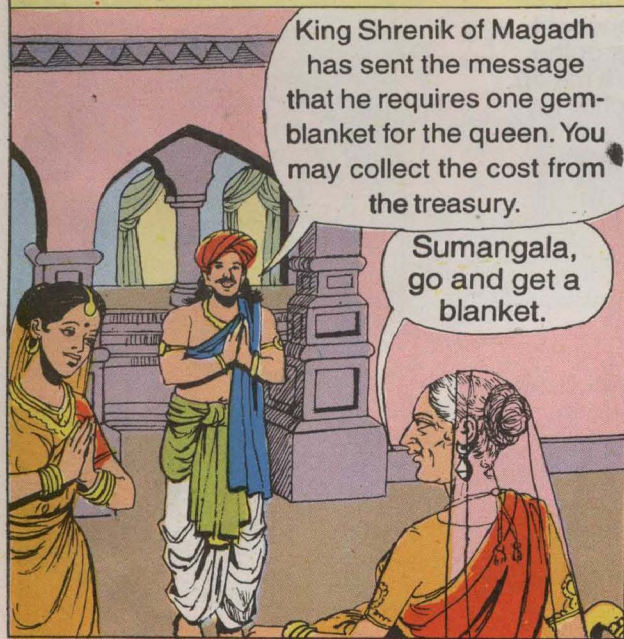
After this Bhadra called her daughters-in-law. She cut each blanket into two and distributed—



At the palace King Shrenik left his court and went into his inner chambers. When he found queen Chelana gloomy he asked—



Finding his queen in pensive mood, the king sent his man to buy one blanket. But the traders were left with none. On getting the story from the traders the king sent his man to Bhadra—



Sumangala came with the information—





The messenger came back and told everything to the king—

The Sethani \* Has humbly requested that as all the blankets have been used. You may demand for anything else for queen Chelana. The Sethani will come herself with the gift.



Taken aback, the king and the queen looked at each other. Shrenik said —

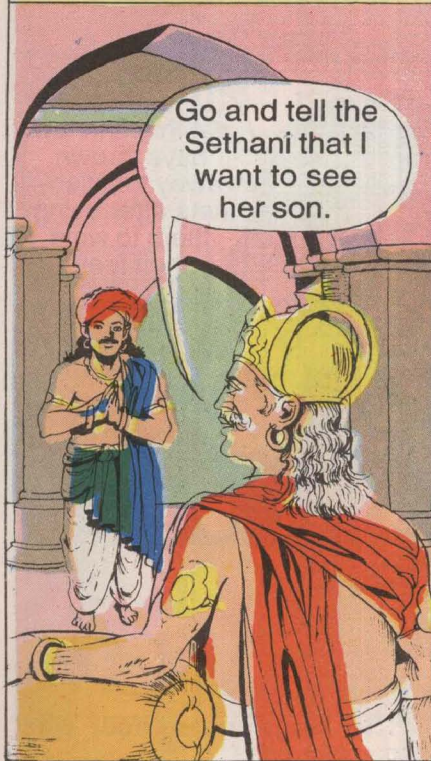
There are such highly prosperous merchants in our city. How grand would be their opulence!!

What is so special about her son and his wives that they throw away gem-blankets just after wiping their feet once? Let's see for ourselves.



The king asked his servants—

Go and tell the Sethani that I want to see her son.



Bhadra herself came to the Palace and submitted before the king—

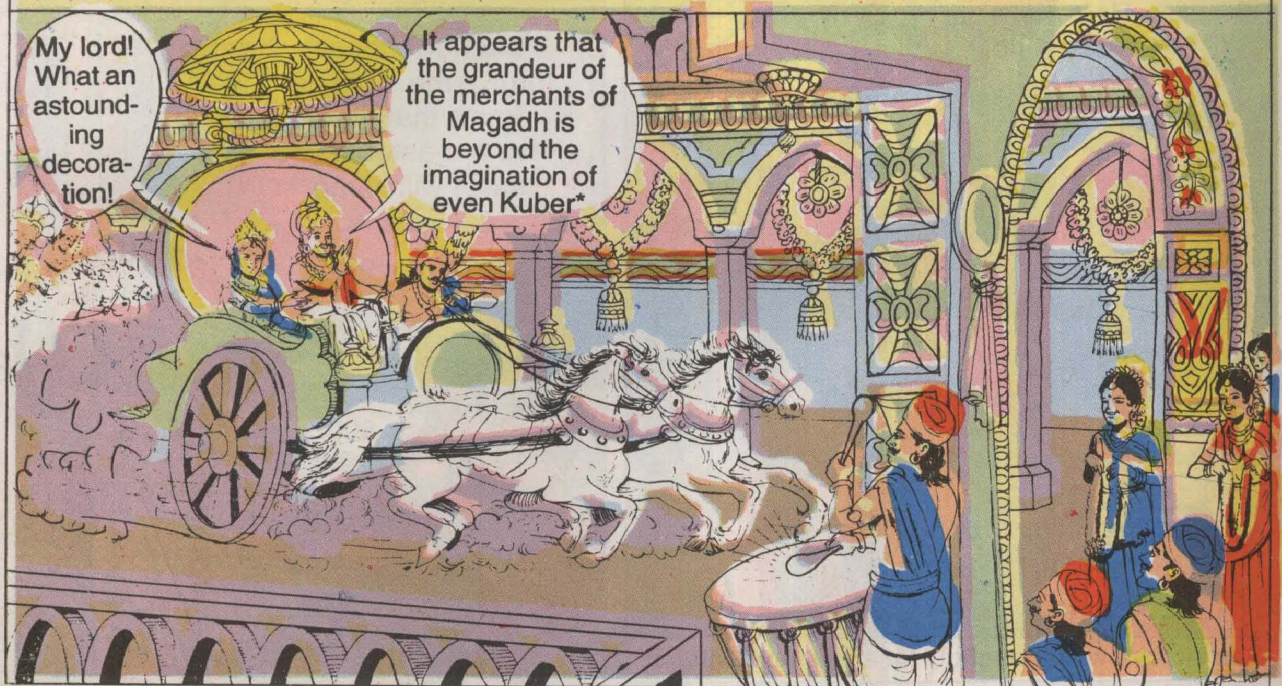
Sire ! Please pardon me. Till this day my son, Shalibhadra, has not set his feet outside our residence. He is innocent about the ways of the world. Kindly give me an opportunity to offer my hospitality to you and your family at my residence.

All right. We will come to your place tomorrow.





Next day King Shrenik and queen Chelana arrived in a chariot at Bhadra's mansion. Swastikas of pearls were made on the gate. Golden pillars were decorated with dangling arches of sapphire beads. Canopies of expensive clothes were suspended all around aesthetically. Looking at the grandeur the queen said—



After a grand welcome the king and queen were brought to a large hall on the fourth floor and offered gem studded thrones. The Sethani said—

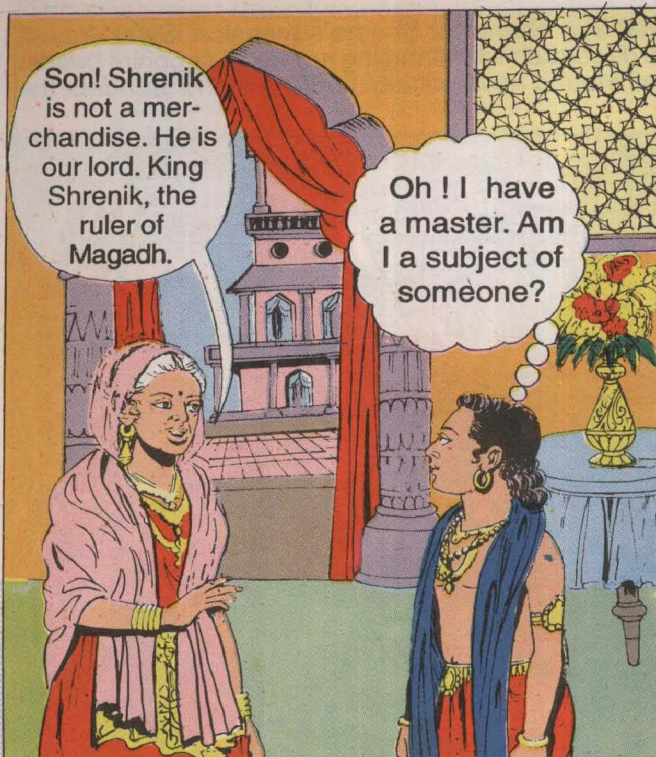


Bhadra went to the seventh floor and said—

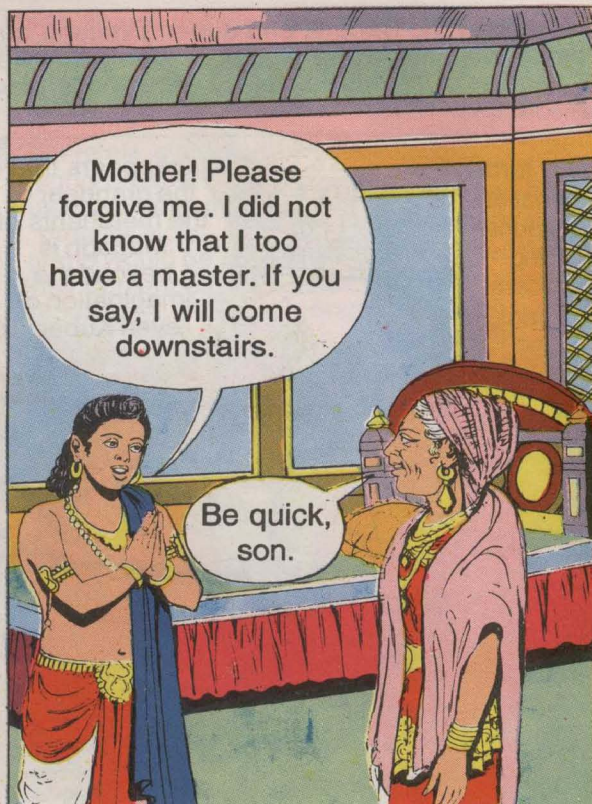


\*The god of wealth.

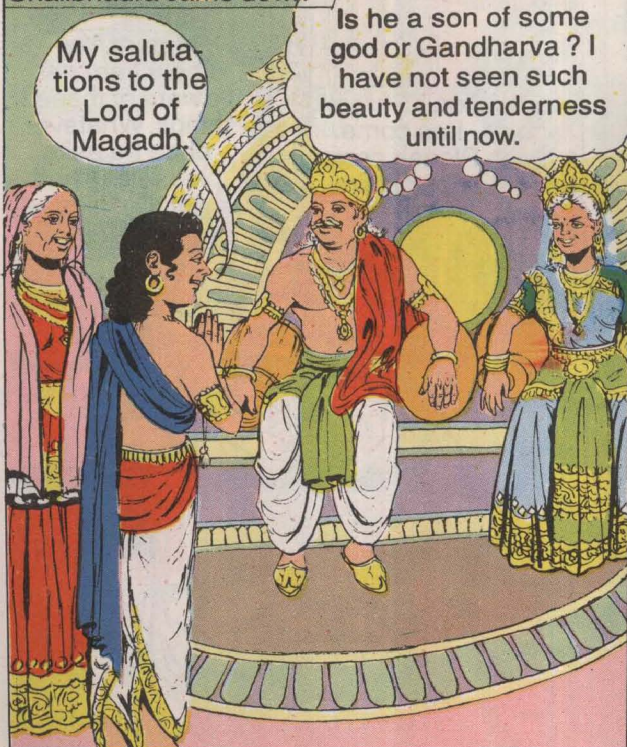




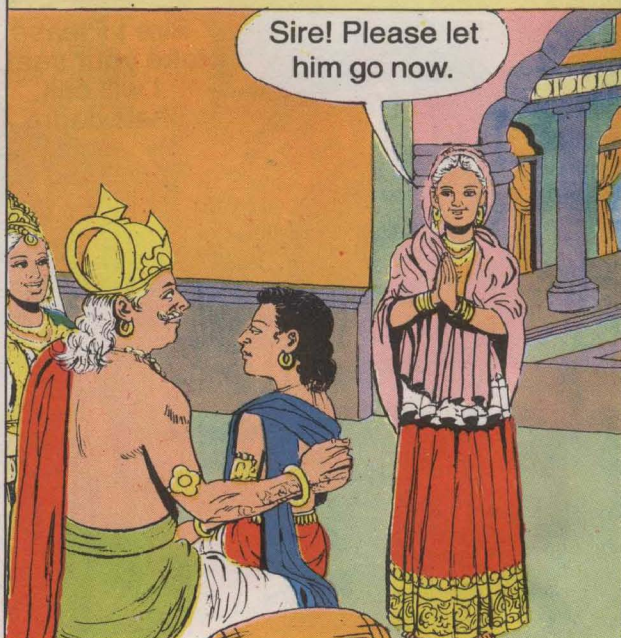
Shalibhadra was thoughtful for a few moments.



Donning divine dresses and ornaments Shalibhadra came down—

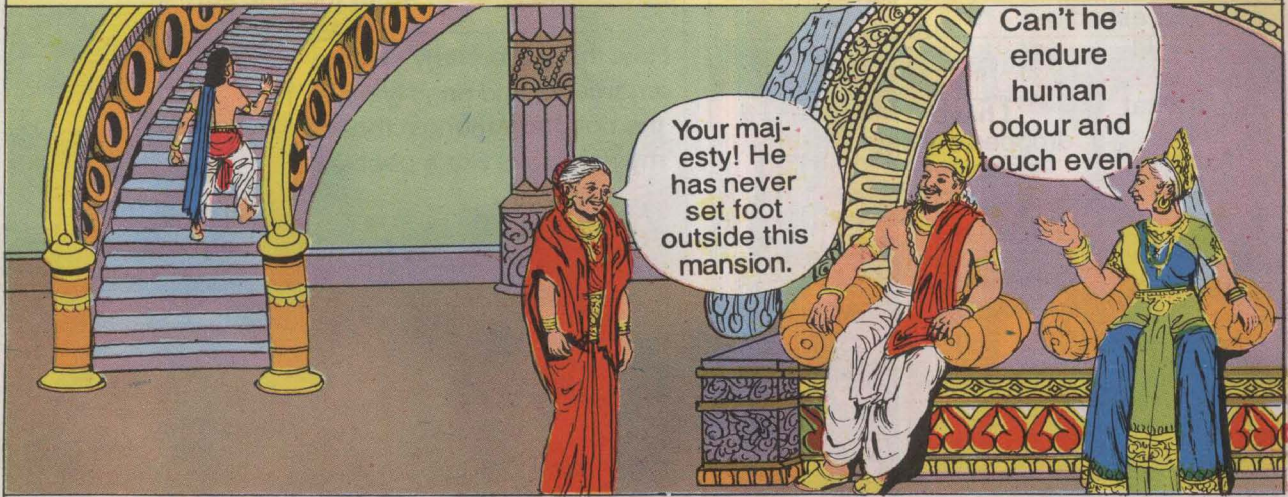


King Shrenik pulled Shalibhadra in his lap. Within a few moments the boy felt suffocated due to the warmth of human touch. Beads of sweat appeared on his forehead, as if he wanted to run away. Bhadra requested—

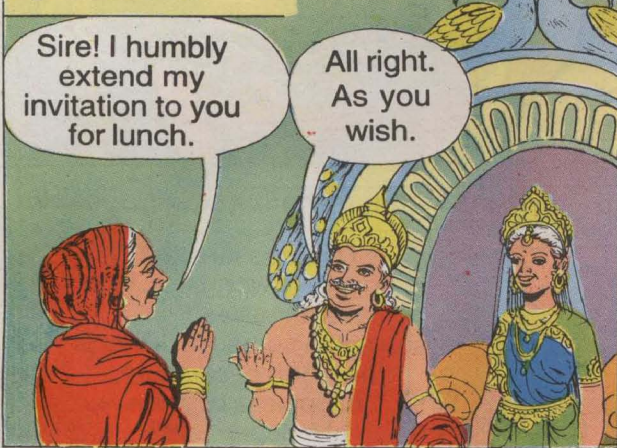




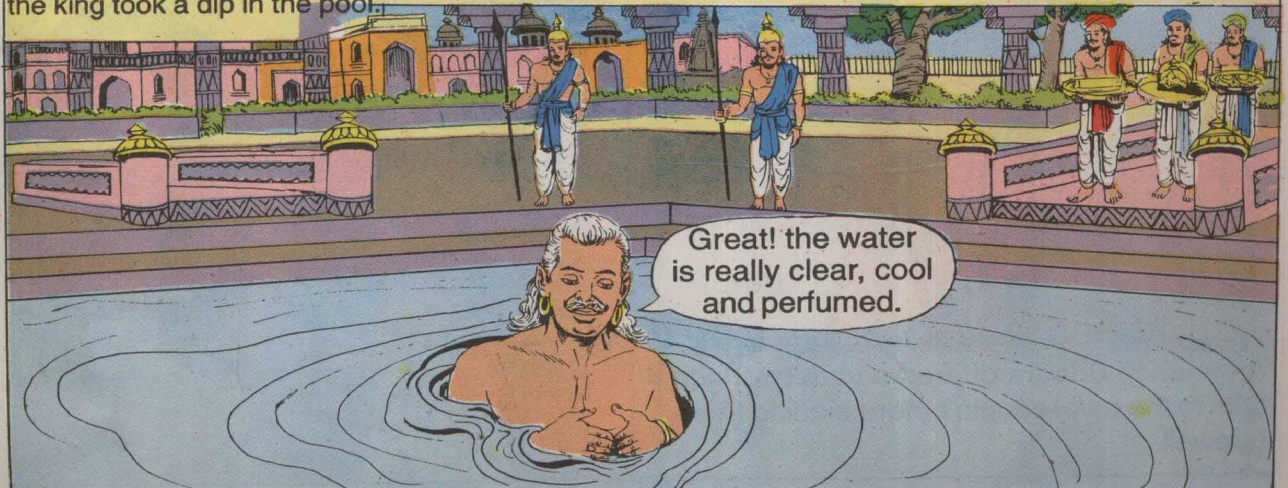
Shrenik left him. Shalibhadra got up, greeted the king and rushed away like a bird freed from a cage.



A little later when Bhadra found the king preparing to leave, she requested—



At a gesture from Bhadra the attendants took the king to the massage chamber. After the massage the king took a dip in the pool.

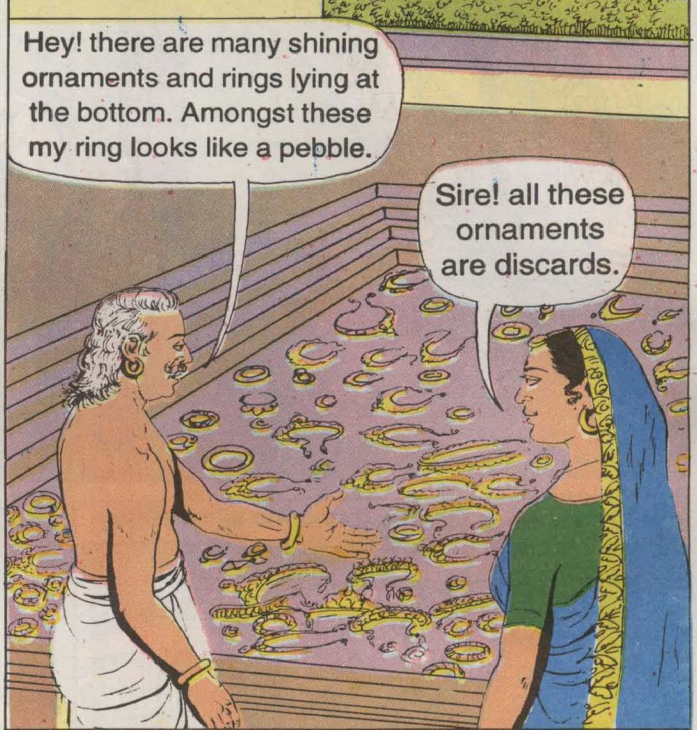




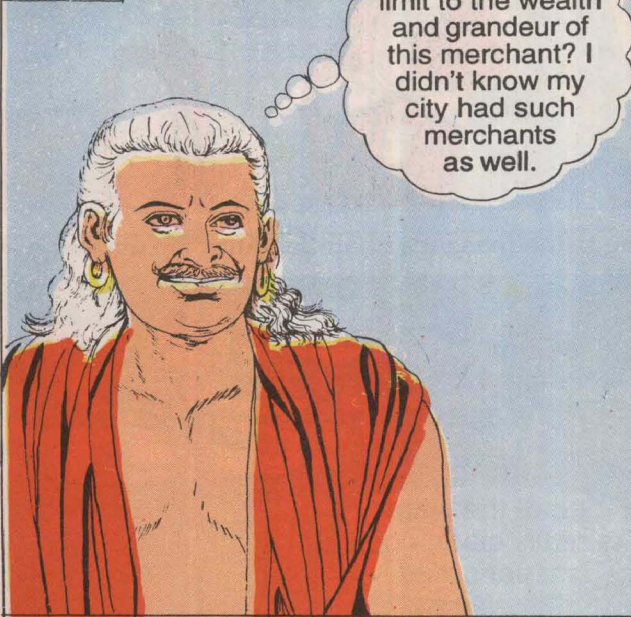
When he came out of the pool the king stooped and looked into the water. A maid came and asked —



To look for the king's ring, the pool was emptied. When the pool was free of water the king saw —

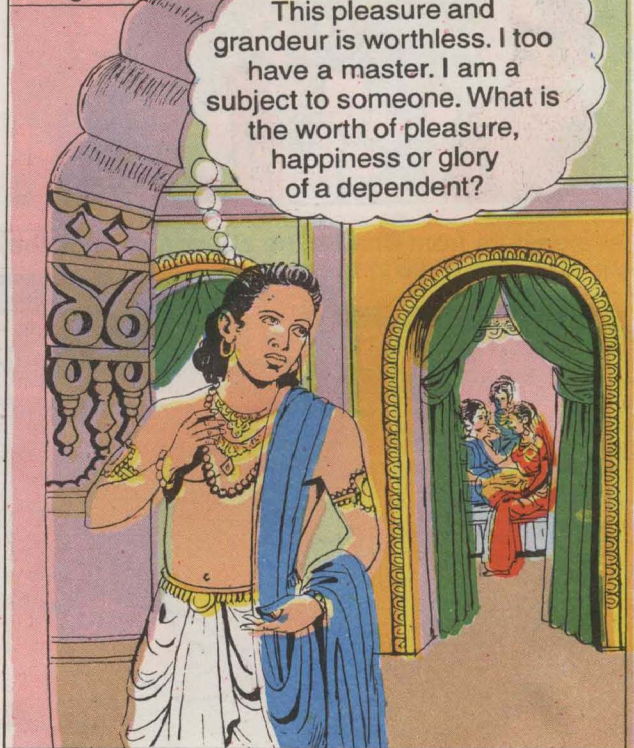


The king once again thinks —



After lunch Bhadra offered a variety of rich gifts to the royal couple before bidding them farewell.

In the mansion, Shalibhadra became thoughtful —





All his thoughts focused at one point—

Now I have to be my own master.

A friend disturbed his thought and informed—

Friend ! Do you know that Acharya Dharmaghosh Suri has come to the town. He is possessed of four Jnana\* and highly impressive.

Shalibhadra got inspired—

Let me go to such sagacious acharya and find solution to my problem.

Taking permission from his mother he came to the garden with his friend. After paying homage, he listened to the discourse. Then he asked—

Bhagavan! Tell me the process by which one can be his own master.

Son! Those who discipline their sense organs and mind become lords of the whole world.

Bhagavan ! I also want to get initiated.

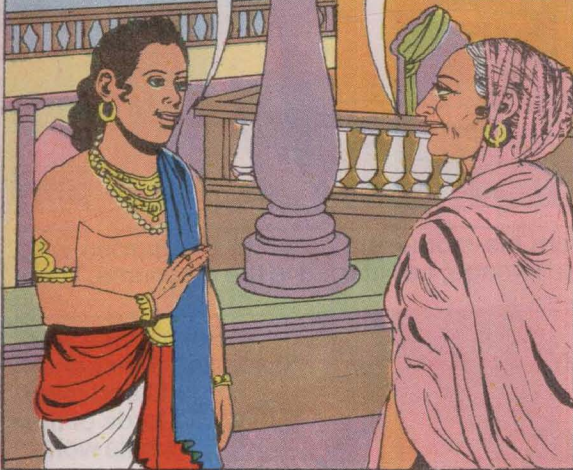
Son! You should get permission from your mother and then get initiated to become your own master.



Shalibhadra returned home and said to his mother—

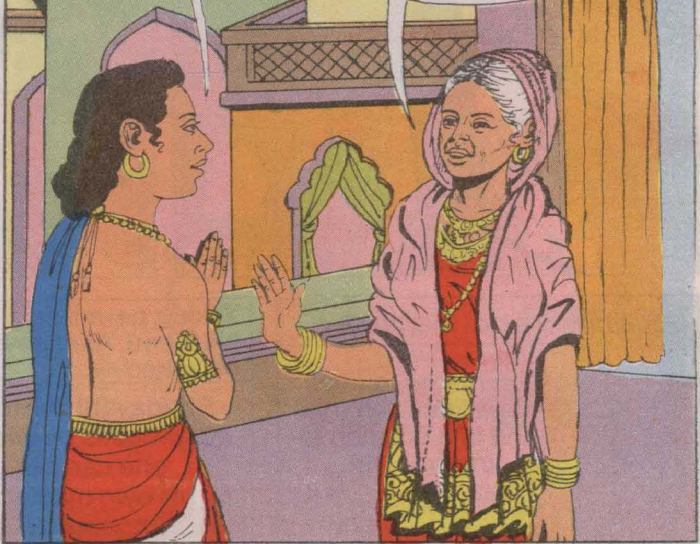
Mother !  
Today I listened  
to the discourse  
of Acharya  
Dharmaghosh  
Suri. I was  
elated.

Son ! You're  
the son of a  
religious  
father. Reli-  
gious dis-  
course would  
naturally  
please you.

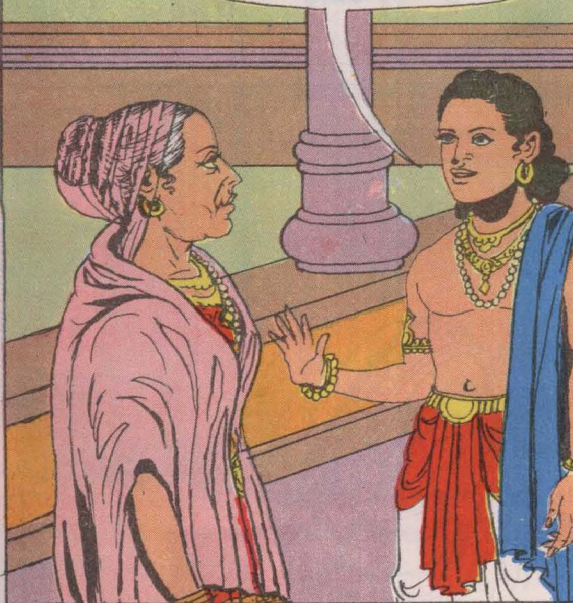


Mother ! Now I  
want to  
renounce  
mundane  
pleasures and  
get initiated as  
an ascetic.

Son! Your body is very  
tender. You have yet to  
experience what is pain and  
sorrow. The path of ascetic  
discipline is more difficult and  
painful than walking on  
sharp thorns.



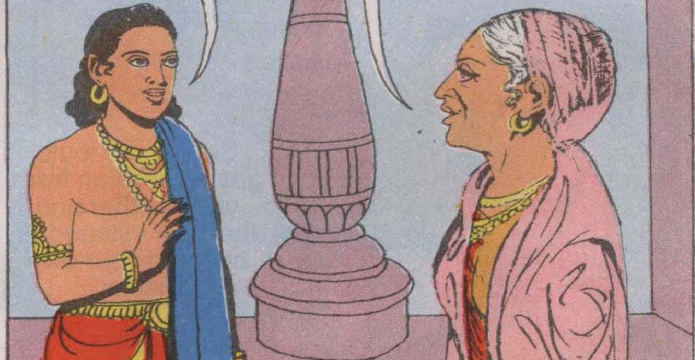
Mother ! I have firmly  
resolved. I will harden this body  
with austerities. I will take all  
afflictions in my stride and  
become my own master.



The mother described the hardships of the ascetic  
life but failed to stop Shalibhadra. He had only one  
answer—

I have to  
liberate my  
soul by getting  
initiated.

Son ! If this is  
what you have resolved,  
you should practice  
renouncing in steps.  
Renounce comforts  
one by one.



Shalibhadra accepted this advise and renounced  
one wife everyday along with some comforts.



One sister of Shalibhadra, Subhadra, was married to minister Dhanya Kumar of Rajagriha. Since she came to know of her brother's decision she became sad.

My brother is becoming an ascetic. Who will look after my mother now.

Every moment Subhadra was obsessed with this thought. One day while she was applying cleansing cream to his husband tears dropped from her eyes. Dhanya Kumar asked with surprise—

Darling ! Why do you cry ? What is the problem ?

In choked voice Subhadra said—

My lord! My brother has decided to become an ascetic. He is renouncing one of his 32 wives each day. Soon he will get initiated. I am going to loose my brother.

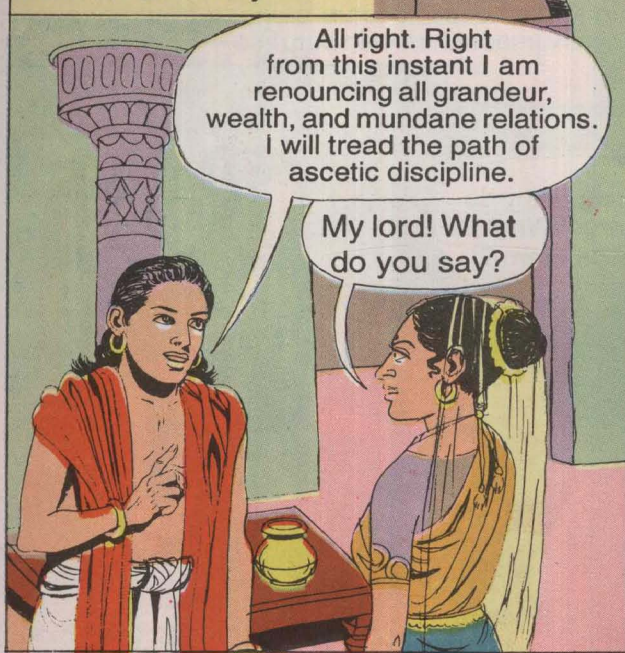
At these words Dhanya Kumar broke into a laughter—

Listen, he is not detached at all. He is a hypocrite. If he has to abandon, why do one by one? Why not at once?

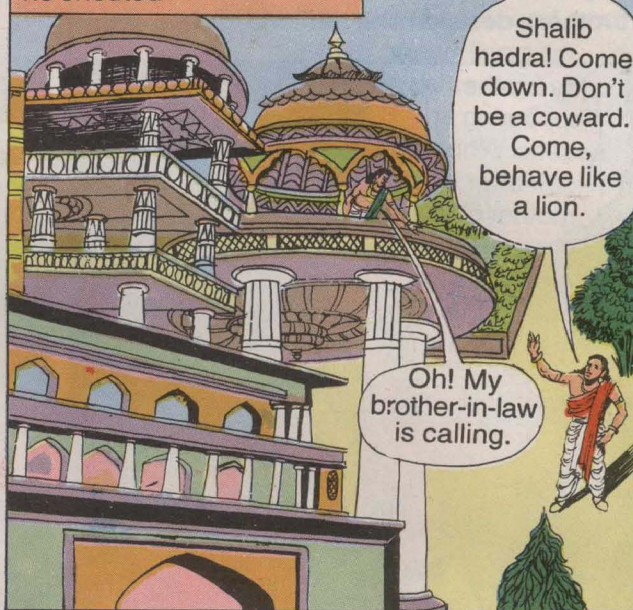
My lord ! It is easier said than done. If he is a hypocrite why don't you set an example by doing what you say ?



At these words Dhanya Kumar paused for a few moments and finally decided—



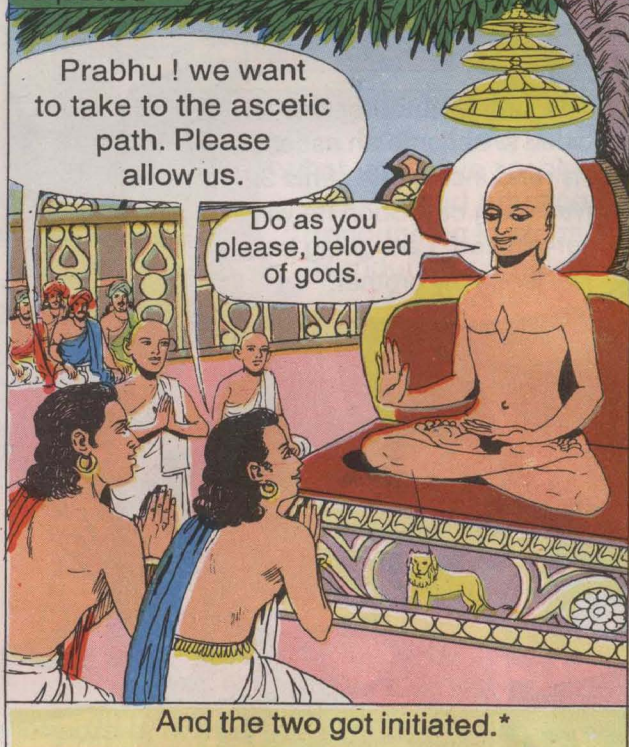
With these words Dhanya Kumar left his house to get initiated. On the way he came to the seven storied mansion of Shalibhadra. From the street he shouted—



Shalibhadra came down. Dhanya Kumar said —



They came to Bhagavan Mahavir and requested



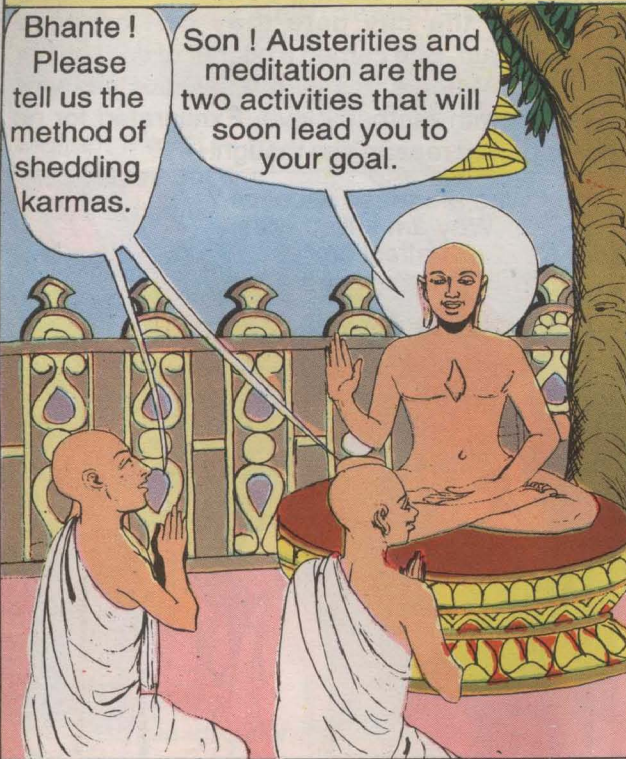
\*Hemchandracharya has written in his Trishashtishalakapurush Charitra that on getting detached Dhanya Kumar directly went to Bhagavan Mahavir and got initiated along with his eight wives. On getting this news Shalibhadra also came to Bhagavan and got initiated. Later they studied the Angasutras and commenced harsh austerities together. This story of Dhanya Kumar calling Shalibhadra has been taken from other books like 'Dhanya-Shalibhadra'.



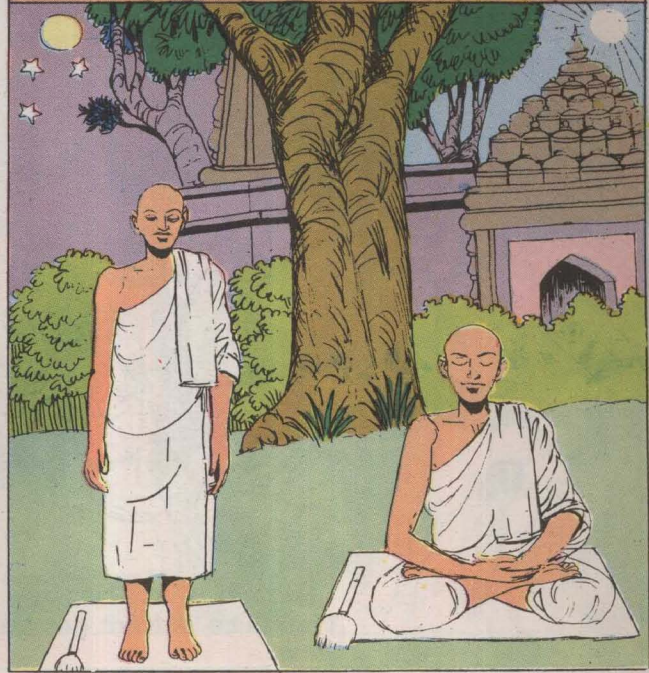
The neo-initiates requested Bhagavan—

Bhante !  
Please  
tell us the  
method of  
shedding  
karmas.

Son ! Austerities and  
meditation are the  
two activities that will  
soon lead you to  
your goal.



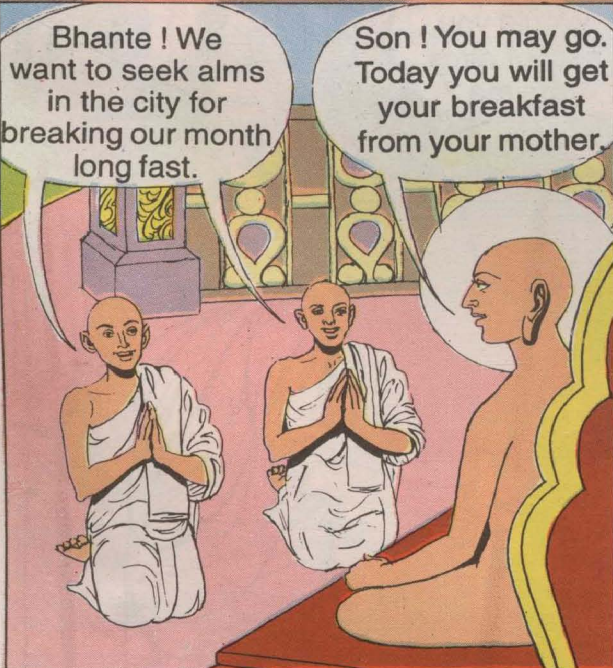
The two ascetics indulged in rigorous austerities.  
They spent all the time doing Kayotsarg meditation.  
Due to these rigorous practices their bodies  
became extremely weak and wiry.



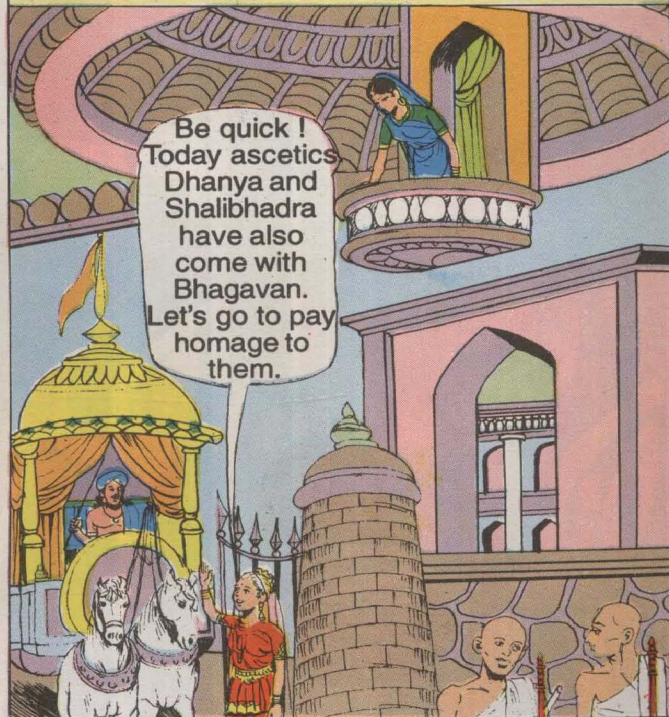
Once Bhagavan Mahavir came again to Rajagriha.  
Thousands of devotees came to pay homage.  
Ascetics Dhanya and Shalibhadra sought permis-  
sion—

Bhante ! We  
want to seek alms  
in the city for  
breaking our month  
long fast.

Son ! You may go.  
Today you will get  
your breakfast  
from your mother.



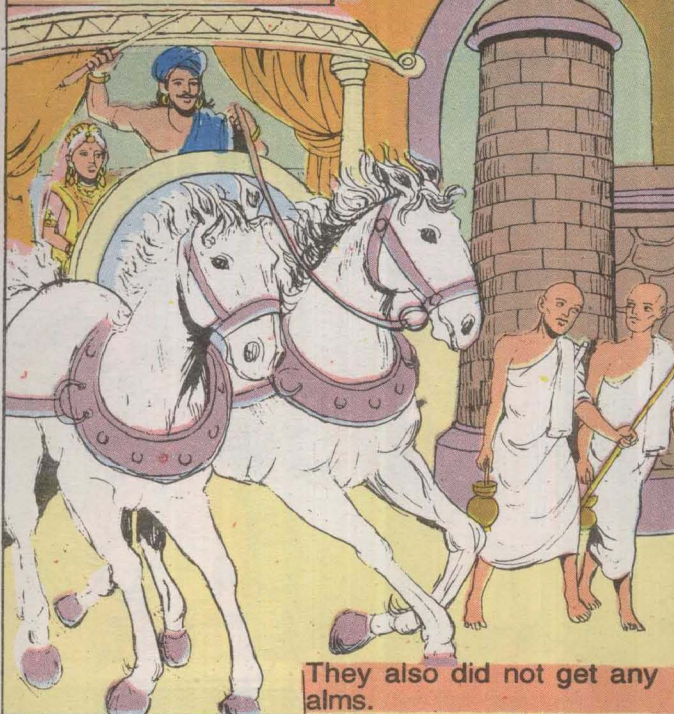
Getting permission the two ascetics wandered  
around in the city and came near Bhadra's house.



Be quick !  
Today ascetics  
Dhanya and  
Shalibhadra  
have also  
come with  
Bhagavan.  
Let's go to pay  
homage to  
them.

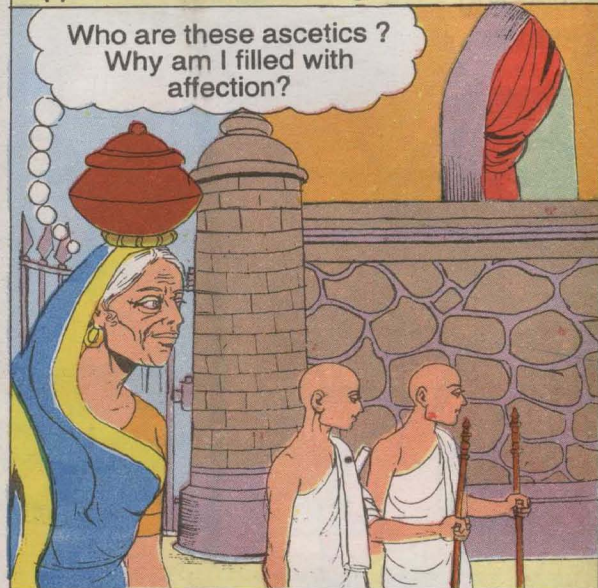


No one recognized the two ascetics standing in front of the house. Right in front of them Sethani Bhadra rode the chariot and left.



They also did not get any alms.

The ascetics started back. When coming out of the city gate they met an aged milkmaid. She carried a pitcher of curd on her head. When she saw the ascetics she was filled with motherly love. Exhilarated for no apparent reason she thought—



Who are these ascetics ?  
Why am I filled with affection?

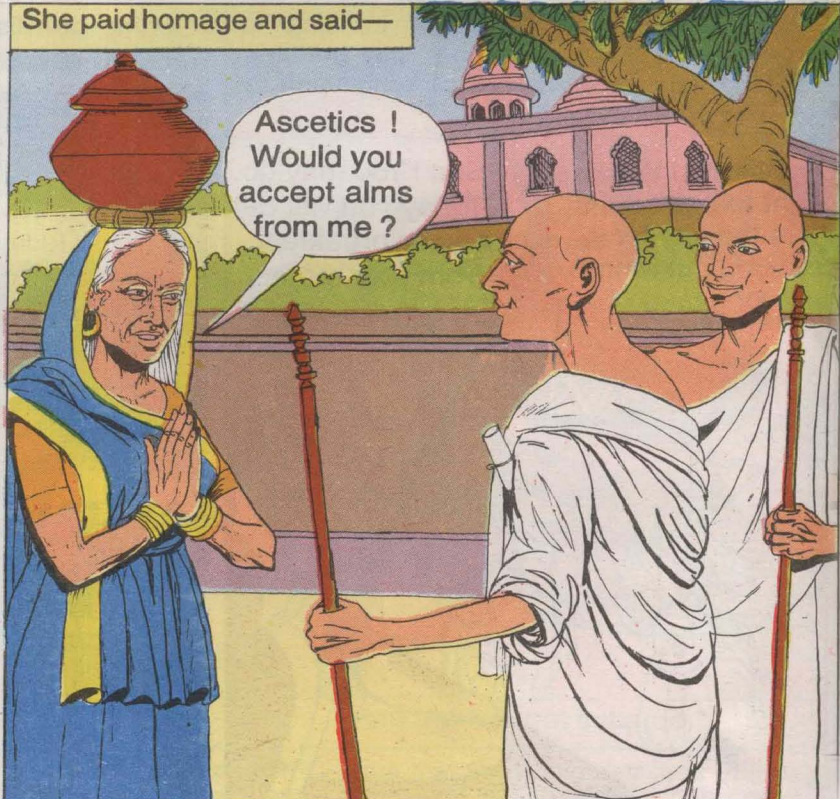
Suddenly she thought—

Let me give this curd as alms to these ascetics?



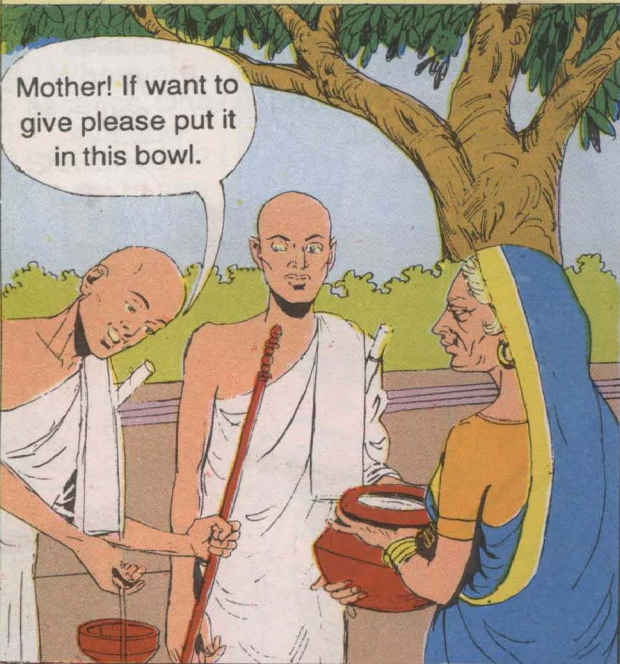
She paid homage and said—

Ascetics !  
Would you accept alms from me ?





The ascetics saw that the alms are pure and faultless. The donor is also pleased and devoted. One of them extended his alms-bowl—



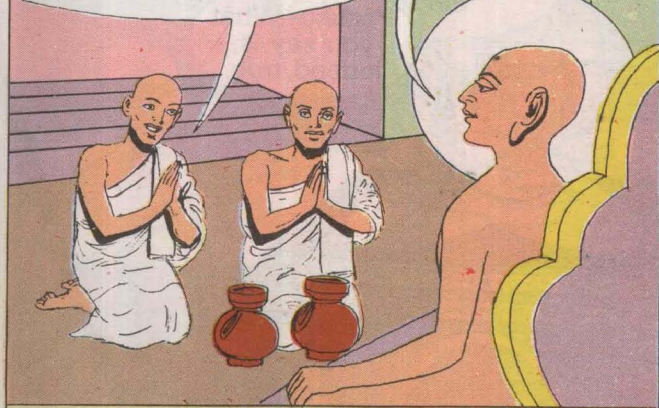
Mother! If want to give please put it in this bowl.

The milkmaid affectionately poured curd in the bowl.

Collecting alms ascetic Shalibhadra came to Bhagavan, showed him the bowl and asked—

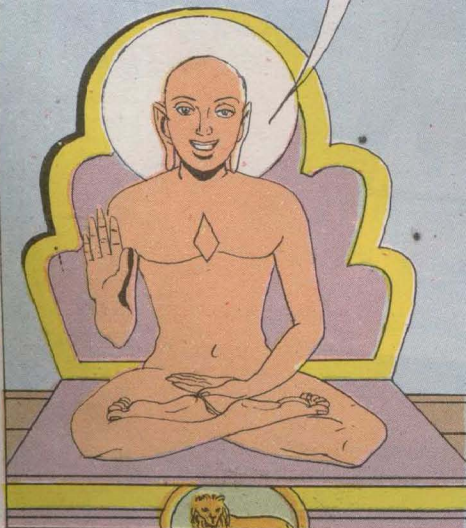
Bhante ! You had said that I will get alms from my mother but I did not get any alms from my mother's house. Nobody even recognized us.

Bhadra! The old milkmaid who gave you curd is your mother from your previous birth.

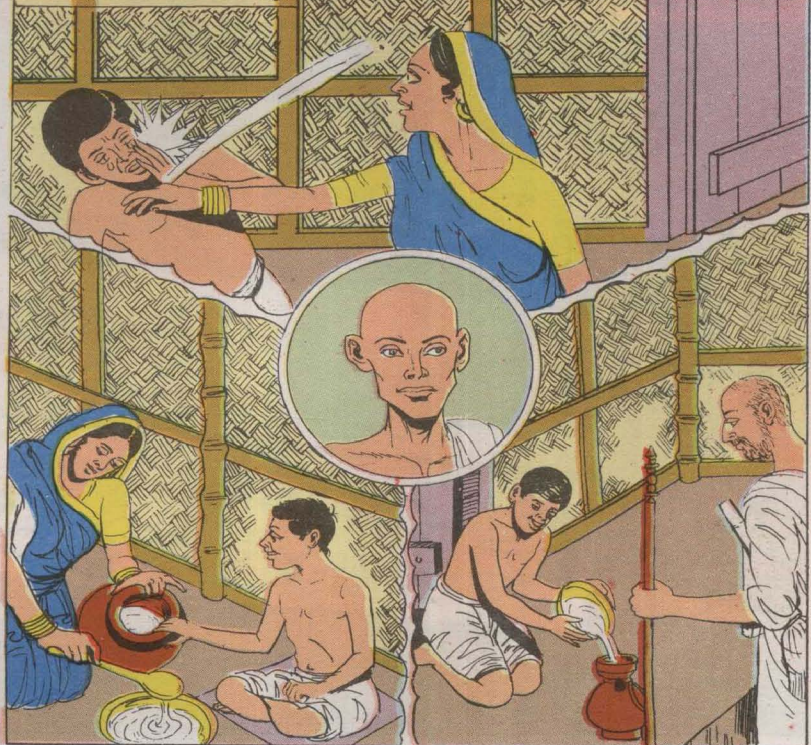


Bhagavan continued—

Shalibhadra ! Try to recall. In your previous birth you were a cowherd's son named Sangam. This Dhanna was your mother.



The incidents from his previous birth came live in ascetic Shalibhadra memory—





Bhagavan said—

Bhadra! The meritorious deed of giving alms to an ascetic observing austerities caused your birth as the son of merchant Gobhadra and Bhadra. You enjoyed enormous wealth because of that only.

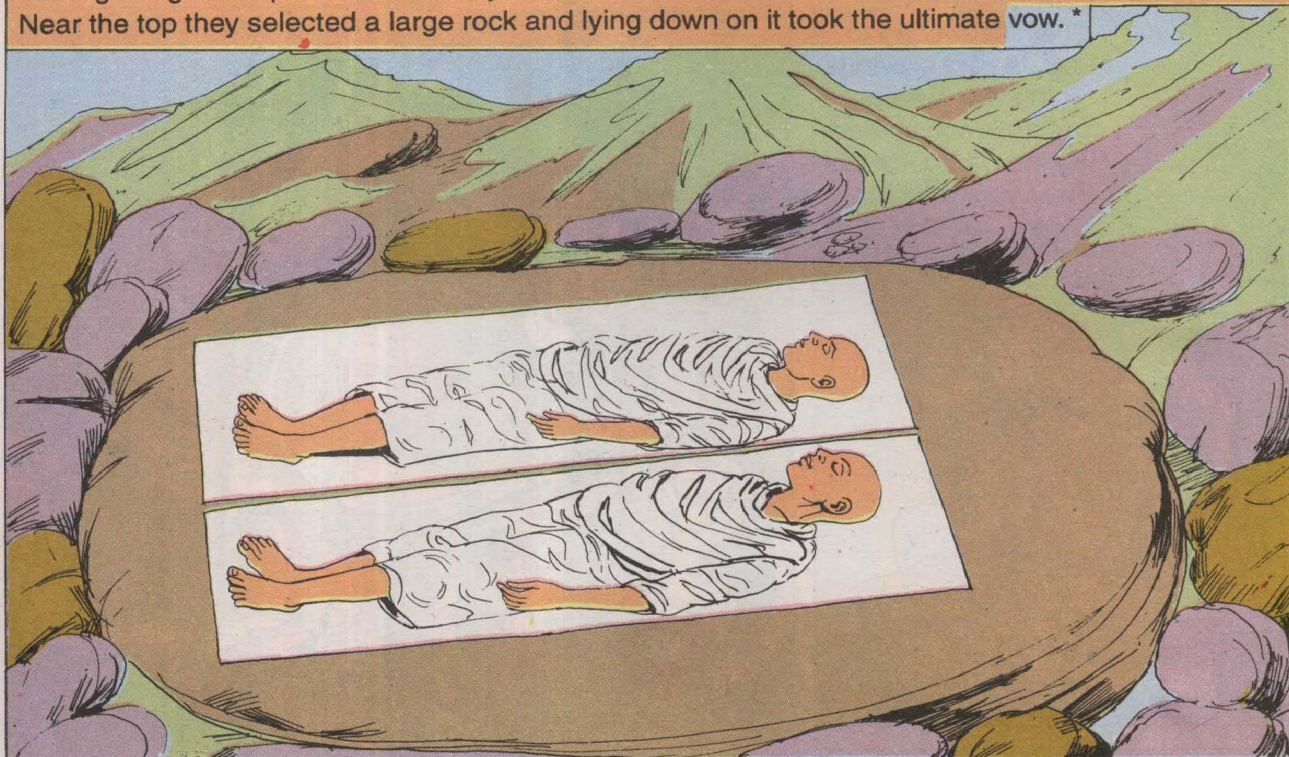
Prabhu! What you say is, indeed, true.

A little later the two ascetics came to Bhagavan again—

Bhante! Due to extreme austerities this body has become very weak. We wish to practice the ultimate vow and attain our goal.

Bhadra! Do what pleases your soul.

Getting Bhagavan's permission Dhanya and Shalibhadra climbed Vaibharagiri hill with senior ascetics. Near the top they selected a large rock and lying down on it took the ultimate vow.\*



\* This ultimate vow is called Padapogaman Santhara. The seeker abandons four types of food and stretches like a tree on a rock. Enduring all afflictions including those by ants, worms, animals, birds, men or gods he embraces death with absolute peace and serenity.



Just then King Shrenik and Bhadra Sethani came to pay homage to Bhagavan Mahavir. Bhadra asked—

Bhante !  
Where are ascetics Dha-  
nya and  
Shalibhadra? I  
want to see  
them.

Lady! They went  
for alms at your  
house. But no  
body recognized  
them due to their  
weak and wiry  
bodies.

Bhadra looked agape. Bhagavan continued—

You were in a hurry to  
come here. Therefore  
the two ascetics  
returned without  
taking alms.

Bhante !  
How unfortunate  
I am.

Then Bhadra  
asked—

Bhante !  
Where are  
the two  
ascetics  
now ?

They have gone to  
Vaibharagiri hill  
and taken the  
ultimate vow.

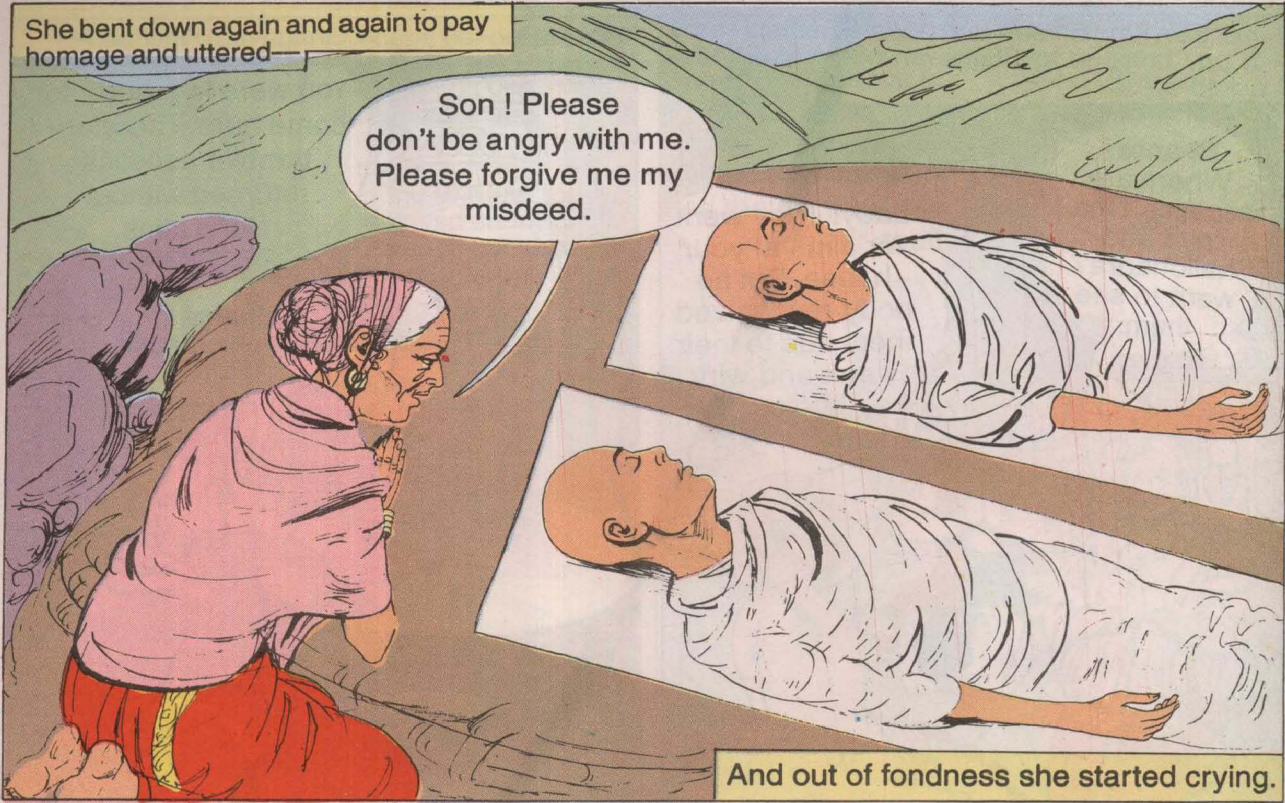
Bhadra went to Vaibharagiri with Shrenik. Seeing the  
two ascetics lying still on the rock she broke down—

Oh son! I am so  
unfortunate that I could  
not offer you the last food  
although you came to  
collect alms at my door.  
All my wishes and dreams  
have shattered.



She bent down again and again to pay homage and uttered—

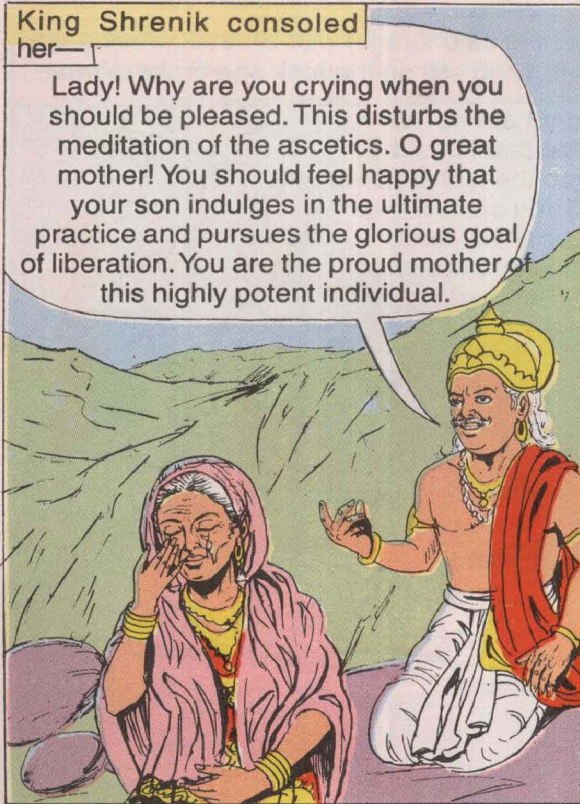
Son ! Please don't be angry with me. Please forgive me my misdeed.



And out of fondness she started crying.

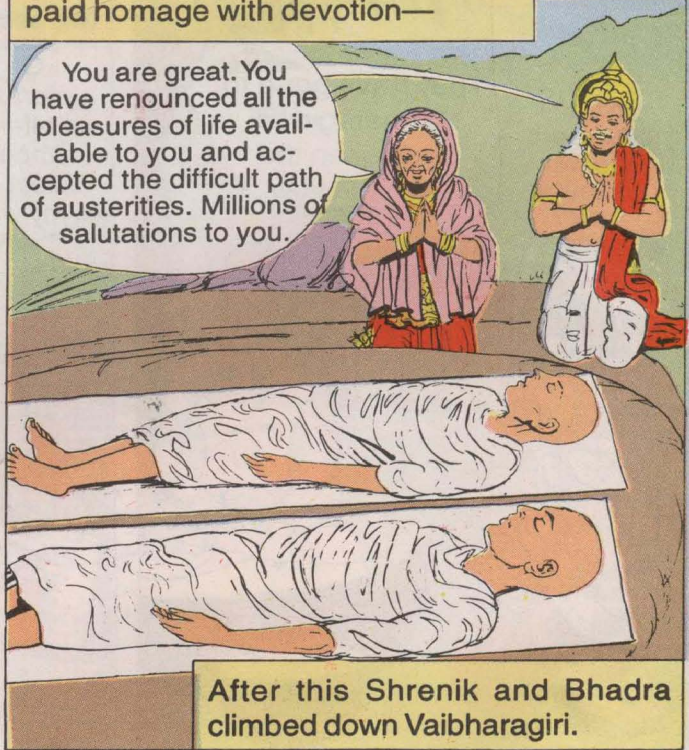
King Shrenik consoled her—

Lady! Why are you crying when you should be pleased. This disturbs the meditation of the ascetics. O great mother! You should feel happy that your son indulges in the ultimate practice and pursues the glorious goal of liberation. You are the proud mother of this highly potent individual.



Bhadra wiped her tears. She and King Shrenik paid homage with devotion—

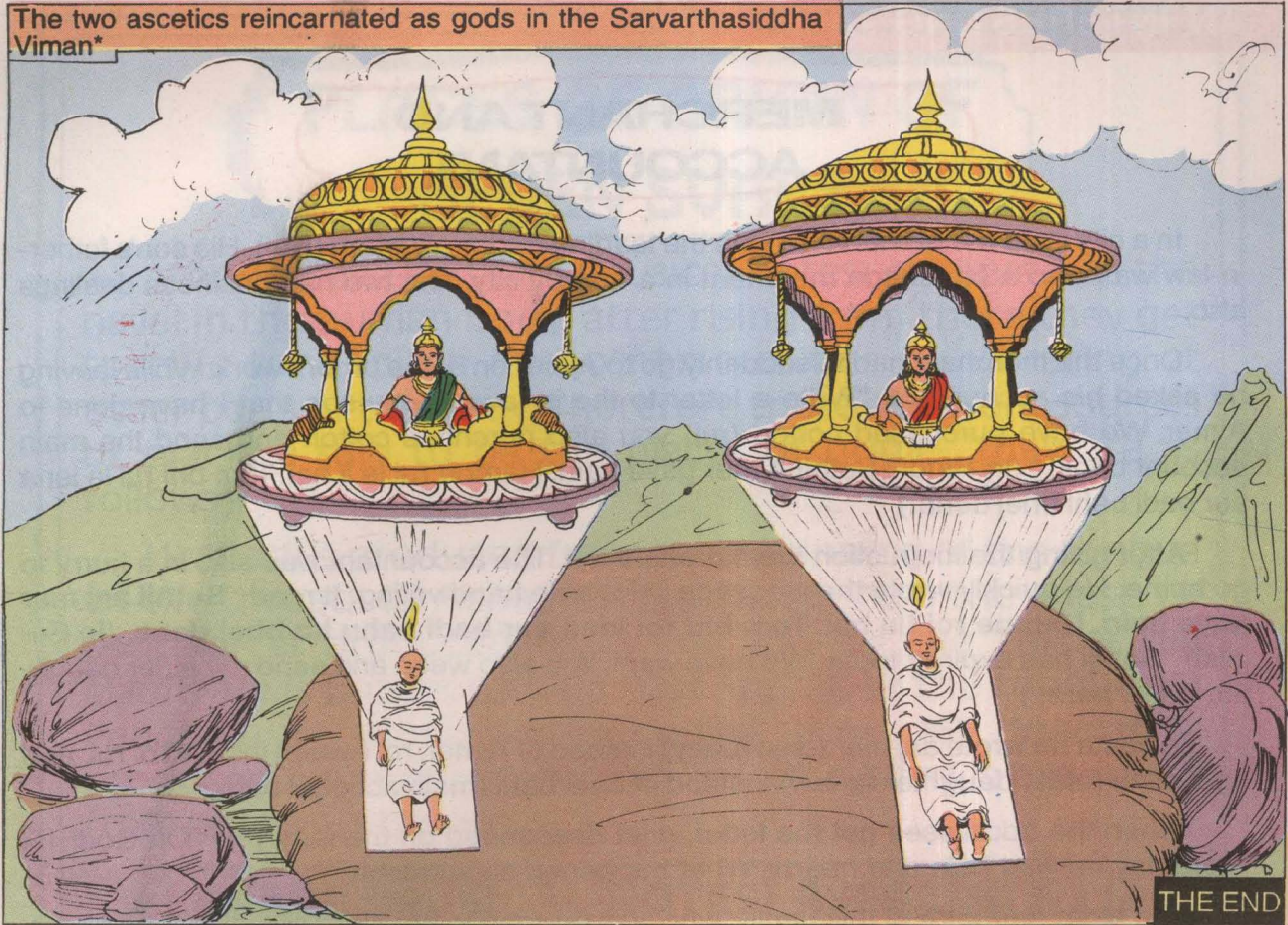
You are great. You have renounced all the pleasures of life available to you and accepted the difficult path of austerities. Millions of salutations to you.



After this Shrenik and Bhadra climbed down Vaibharagiri.



The two ascetics reincarnated as gods in the Sarvarthasiddha Viman\*



## THE LESSON

This story of Shalibhadra draws attention to following main points —

- Charity given with pure and pious feelings is highly beneficial. In charity the importance is not of the thing or its value but that of the feeling. Feeling happy after giving charity magnifies its fruits manifold.
- Dhanna and Shalibhadra had no dearth of wealth and grandeur. There was no want of worldly comforts as well. But like birds in a cage, they never felt joy and happiness in mundane pleasures. They did not find freedom of soul in worldly activities. When they renounced everything and got free of attachment and fondness they experienced extreme joy and happiness even in harsh austerities. They had become their own masters.

This proves that bliss and happiness are not in mundane affluence, they are in spiritual experience. Any one desirous of spiritual bliss has to abandon mundane pleasures. He who wants to be his own master can not endure any form of dependence.



## AN INTERESTING TALE

### MERCHANT AND ACCOUNTANT

In a city lived a merchant. He was the leading trader of cotton (Rui). His son's father-in-law was also a big cotton merchant in a nearby city. The two had business dealings also.

Once the merchant had to suddenly go to Ajmer on some urgent work. While leaving he asked his accountant, "Write a letter to the in-laws of my son that I have gone to Ajmer. We have purchased cotton (rui) you also purchase cotton and send the main account book." (In Hindi : Sethji Ajmer gaye hain. Hamne rui le li hai. Tum bhi rui le lena aur badi bahi bhej dena.)

After giving the instruction the merchant left. The accountant was also in a hurry to go home. He quickly wrote the message in illegible handwriting. It read : **Sethji aaj mar gaye hain. Hamne roi lia hai. Tum bhi roi lena aur badi bahu ko bhej dena.** (In English : Sethji has expired today. We have wept. You also weep and send my elder daughter-in-law here. )

In haste he wrote aaj mar (died today) instead of Ajmer, roi (weep) instead of rui, and badi bahu (elder daughter-in-law) instead of badi bahi (main account book).

When the addressee got the letter, grief descended on the family — "Oh God! Till yesterday he was hale and hearty. What happened so suddenly."

The elder daughter of this family, who was married to the elder son of the merchant, at once left for her in-laws with her brother.

When she saw her father-in-law sitting normally she was astonished — Oh God! Is it the ghost of my father-in-law.

With great difficulty she could be convinced that the merchant was alive.

The daughter-in-law— But my father got a letter from our accountant that father-in-law had expired.

When the merchant inquired it was revealed on him that the accountant had written the letter in haste. That was the reason wrong message had gone. The accountant was reprimanded. Everyone laughed and celebrated the rebirth of the merchant.



**Message : Children! Illegible writing sometimes conveys wrong and damaging message. Therefore always try to write carefully and legibly.**



## PLACES OF ORIGIN OF SEVEN SVARS

Athough all the svars (musical notes) originate at the navel in the human body, after rising from there they get specific tone, pitch and other qualities by vibrating at other parts of the body. Therefore these apparent sources of svar are said to be the places of origin. They are as follows—

(1) *Shadj* is produced from the beginning of the tongue (at the throat). (2) *Rishabh* is produced from the chest. (3) *Gandhar* is produced from the top of the throat. (4) *Madhyam* is produced from the middle of the tongue. (5) *Pancham* is produced from the nose. (6) *Dhaivat* is produced from the teeth and lips. (7) *Nishad* is produced from raised eyebrows.

### SVARS (MUSICAL NOTES) ASSOCIATED WITH BEINGS AND NON-BEINGS

S.No.	SVAR	JIVA	AJIVA
1.	Shadj svar	Pea-cock	Mridang
2.	Rishabh svar	Cock	Gomukhi
3.	Gandhar svar	Swan	Conch-shell
4.	Madhyam svar	Lamb	Manjira
5.	Pancham svar	Cuckoo	Godhika
6.	Dhaivat svar	Cranes	Dholak
7.	Nishad svar	Elephant	Mahabheri

—Sutra : 260





## THE STARTING PLACE OF SEVEN SOUNDS (SVAR)

(See Details Overleaf)

Picture taken from Illustrated Anuyog-Dvar Sutra, EDITOR : Shri Amar Muni